Radiance

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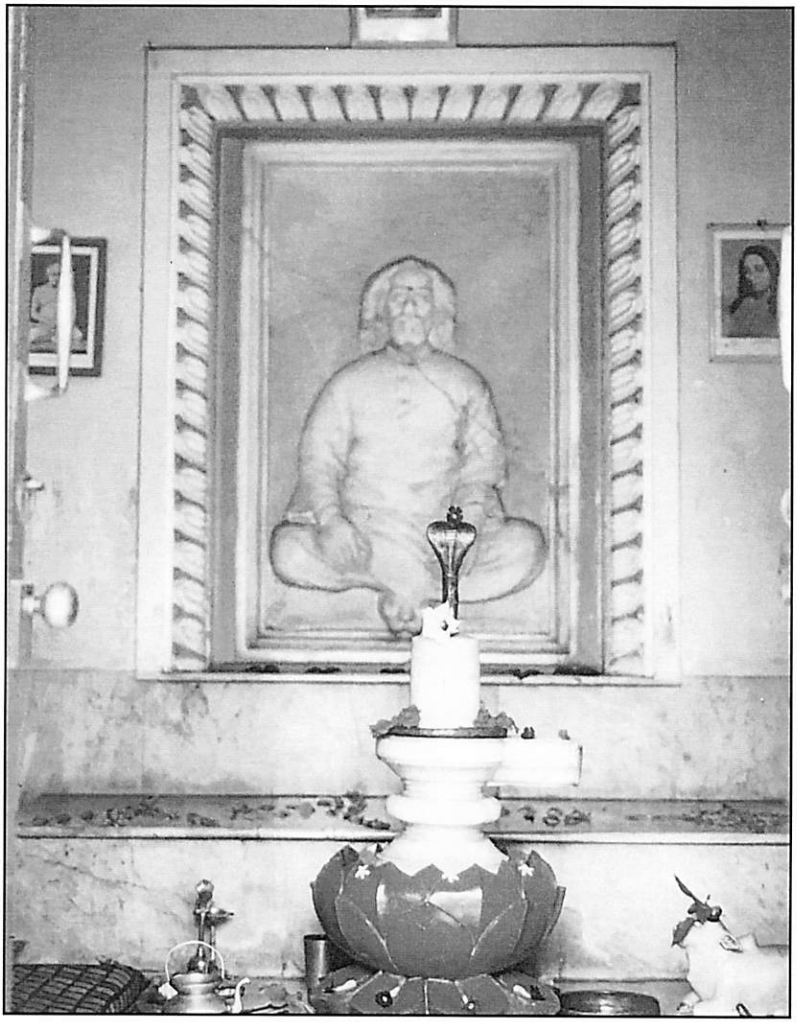

Marble bas relief of Sri Yukteswar inside his Samadhi Shrine

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Written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the Kriya Yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their successors.
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Guidelines to Discipleship

Remember that you belong to no one, and no one belongs to you. Reflect that some day you will have to leave this world, so make the acquaintance of God now. It is only because of delusion [misperception of what is true] that you perceive yourself as a physical body. Meditate unceasingly to realize your real, divine nature. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

disciple Latin *discipulus*, a student; from *discere*, to learn.

When you were initiated, you learned meditation methods and were encouraged to commit to the life-path of discipleship. Regular and skillful practice of the unique meditation techniques and routines can enable you to realize your true nature and your relationship to the Infinite. Equally important as attentive meditation practice is dedicated discipleship. A disciple on the spiritual path adheres to lifestyle regimens and practices advocated by representatives of a philosophical system or enlightenment tradition.

Some essentials of discipleship are:

- *Humility*. Characteristics of humbleness are respectful attitudes and behaviors in regard to others and to civil laws and the laws of nature, deferential acknowledgment of what is true, willingness to learn, and absence of arrogance (an exaggerated sense of self-importance). Arrogance is a symptom of egotism: attachment to one's illusional sense of selfhood.
- *Continuous learning*. For the duration of our involvement with the ever-changing realm of nature there will always be something new to discover. Until your Self- and God-realization is flawless, you will need to persist in right endeavors and be both receptive and responsive to the impulses of God's grace.
- *Experimentation in adapting newly acquired knowledge and new states of awareness to ordinary circumstances to be able to live effectively*. Skillful living is a beneficial spiritual practice that will enable you to understand how the universe functions and to appropriately relate to and interact with it. You will

then more easily experience the fulfillment of meaningful purposes—of aims and goals which have real value. Endeavors to accomplish *meaningless* purposes confine and distort awareness, create attachments to useless relationships, dissipate energies, increase problem-causing mental impressions (samskaras, subconscious conditionings), and restrict the unfoldment of soul qualities. The primary purpose of dedicated kriya yoga practice is to remove all mental and physical restrictions, thus allowing soul awareness to be restored to wholeness.

- *Willingness to grow to full emotional and spiritual maturity,* demonstrated by rational thinking and self-responsible personal behaviors and constructive actions.
- *Unwavering resolve to awaken to liberation of consciousness,* permanent soul freedom beyond which there is nothing more to be accomplished.

It is only by living in accord with and being aware of the effects of the laws of life (the principles and processes that determine the relationships that occur between or among observable events) that they can be fully comprehended. It is for this reason that kriya yoga initiates must clearly understand that all of the recommended lifestyle regimens are important.

> Only that person who lives the [right] life will understand these teachings. – *Saying attributed to the Buddha*

> If you continue in my word [adhere to what you are taught], then you are my disciples indeed [in fact]; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. –*New Testament / Gospel of St. John 8:31,32*

Complete practice of kriya yoga includes:

- Rational, constructive thinking.
- Mastery of emotions, desires, and sensory impulses.
- Compliant observance of moral and ethical guidelines.
- Adherence to lifestyle routines that nurture and support health and overall well-being.
- Purposeful, effective living.

- Study, analysis, and comprehension of metaphysical (beyond the physical) realities.
- Mental and spiritual attunement with the knowledgeable teachers of the tradition.
- Skillful meditation practice that clarifies awareness and elicits refined superconscious (samadhi) states that progress to Self-realization, cosmic consciousness, God-realization, and complete liberation of consciousness.
- Surrender (letting go) of the false, illusional sense of selfhood, to realize (apprehend and experience) the one field of unbounded Consciousness (God) of which souls are individualized units.

The kriya yoga practice of initiates who only read the literature and use the meditation techniques while being inattentive to the recommended lifestyle regimens is not really complete. They may then wonder why meditation practice is difficult or unproductive, psychological transformation is slow, personal circumstances are not always satisfying, or spiritual growth does not occur.

Psychological Health and Emotional Maturity: The Essential Requirements for Authentic Spiritual Growth

The thoughts you habitually think, your mental attitudes and emotional states, reactions to events, personal relationships, and actions are chosen by you. How you think and behave determines your existing circumstances and will, to a large extent, determine those you will experience in the near and distant future. If you want any aspect of your life to be improved, you have only to exercise your freedom of choice and decisively act in accord with your choices.

When you have been informed of the facts of life, do not pretend to be ignorant of them, or deny your ability to function skillfully and think rationally. You are an individualized unit of one field of Consciousness expressing through a material mind and physical body. Your primary purpose for being in this world is to awaken to conscious awareness of what you are in relationship to the wholeness of life. Knowing this, established in being, live effectively.

Choose to be emotionally mature. Assume responsibility for

your thoughts, actions, and circumstances. Refuse to allow mental confusion, emotional unrest, or psychological conflicts to dominate your awareness. Don't let debilitating habits dissipate your vital forces, weaken your health, diminish your financial (or other) resources, mar worthwhile relationships, or interfere with the efficient accomplishment of your meaningful purposes.

Be optimistic, cheerful, and calmly energetic. Optimistic people are usually healthier, happier, more successful and live longer than people who are pessimistic.

Renounce useless or self-centered thoughts, feelings, desires, activities, and relationships. Simplify your life. Decide how much time and energy to devote to spiritual studies and practices, self-care routines, work, family and social interaction, and whatever else you consider to be of value.

If you work to earn money, manage it wisely. Do work that serves society and the planet. Use the value that money represents for what you want or need, or want to do or accomplish. Save a portion of your income on a regular schedule and invest it wisely. Support, with money and your volunteer service, only those projects which are constructive and worthwhile. Learn to function skillfully in space and time without mental or emotional attachment to your actions or their results. Live effectively in the world without being burdened by it. Matter is the energy of Consciousness manifested. The forms of energy change; the Source of energy does not change, nor is it diminished.

Cultivate only wholesome, life-enhancing thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and relationships. You need not be bound by the opinions of others. Whatever you do, or allow, that contributes to your total well-being and rapid spiritual growth is acceptable. Whatever diminishes your life or inhibits spiritual growth should be avoided.

Cultivate wholesome mental attitudes and emotions by an act of will (decisive intention) and by constant Self-remembrance of your true nature in relationship to the Infinite. Nurture awareness of the presence of God within and around you. Assume and express the characteristics and qualities you want to have.

Awareness is clarified by meditation on a chosen object of attention that is pleasing or agreeable. – *Yoga-Sutras 1:39*

Mental, moral, and spiritual strength may be acquired by contemplation on friendliness, compassion, and other noble qualities. – *Yoga-Sutras 3:24*

It will be very helpful for you to have an understanding of your basic mind-body constitution as described in ayurvedic literature. You can then more easily adopt a lifestyle that will enable you to be healthy and functional and choose spiritual practices that will allow beneficial results to rapidly occur.

Discern the Difference Between Your Real Nature and What You Observe

Your true nature is pure consciousness. If you habitually think or feel that you are other than pure consciousness, use your powers of discriminative intelligence and intuition to discern the difference between what you really are and the various thoughts, moods, and unclear states of awareness that may be perceived. You will then be able to dispassionately (without bias or emotion) observe them while remaining established in Self-awareness.

Acknowledge and affirm (declare to be true):

"I am not a physical body which was born, changes, and will eventually be discarded."
"I am not a mind which is subject to being modified."
"I am an immortal spiritual being, an individualized aspect of infinite Consciousness."

Pacify existing, troublesome subliminal (beneath the threshold of conscious awareness) impulses and tendencies (vasanas) which, if not regulated and purified, may cause mental restlessness and emotional disturbance. Harmful subliminal impulses modify awareness and interfere with endeavors to concentrate. Constructive subliminal impulses and tendencies can be allowed to be expressive until you are established in Self-realization and no longer need the support of their influences. Troublesome impulses

can be regulated and pacified by: 1) resisting and neutralizing their actions; 2) constructive living; 3) meditation, regularly practiced to the stage of superconsciousness.

Never say (or feel) that you are powerless, that you cannot choose your thoughts, emotional states, and behaviors. Think rationally. Nurture emotional stability. Act wisely and decisively. Subliminal states will then be transformed as their destructive drives are weakened and neutralized, and constructive influences are strengthened.

Any untrue beliefs or opinions that you may have are delusions. Mistaken or inaccurate perceptions of what has been observed in the past or is currently being observed are illusions. If you have any delusions or illusions, banish them immediately and avoid them in the future. The habit of indiscriminately believing to be real what is perceived by the senses—and the invalid opinions of others who are similarly conditioned—causes delusions which result in mental confusion and keep soul awareness confined. To remove delusions and avoid illusions:

- Choose to be knowledgeable and competent. You have the capacity to know what is true and to live skillfully and effectively.
- Improve your intellectual and intuitive powers of discernment.
- Insightfully examine ideas and opinions expressed by others to determine whether or not they are valid.
- Use your common sense.
- When you meditate, by a gentle act of will power and by using a meditation technique if necessary, detach and withdraw your attention from the senses and direct it inward to the spiritual eye and higher brain centers. Consciously doing this will remove your awareness from environmental, sensory, and mental influences and enable you to experience your true nature. When subliminal impulses are subdued, awareness is clarified, and powers of discernment are no longer restricted, you will be able to recognize delusions and illusions and will not be inclined to harbor them. Your awareness will expand and your functional abilities will be vastly improved.
- Train yourself to be alert and attentive. Think rationally. Speak

and otherwise communicate with specific intention. Be observant. Accurately perceive the truth (facts) of what you see, read, or hear. Avoid fantasy and unrealistic wishful thinking.

Keep Your Attention and Actions Focused on the Four Primary Aims of Life to Be Fulfilled

Don't waste time, energy, or personal resources by indulging in passive daydreaming, whim-impelled behaviors, or useless social involvements. To efficiently accomplish your meaningful purposes and to experience rapid spiritual growth, devote your time and energy only to essentials; ignore nonessentials. Paramahansa Yogananda often reminded his disciples:

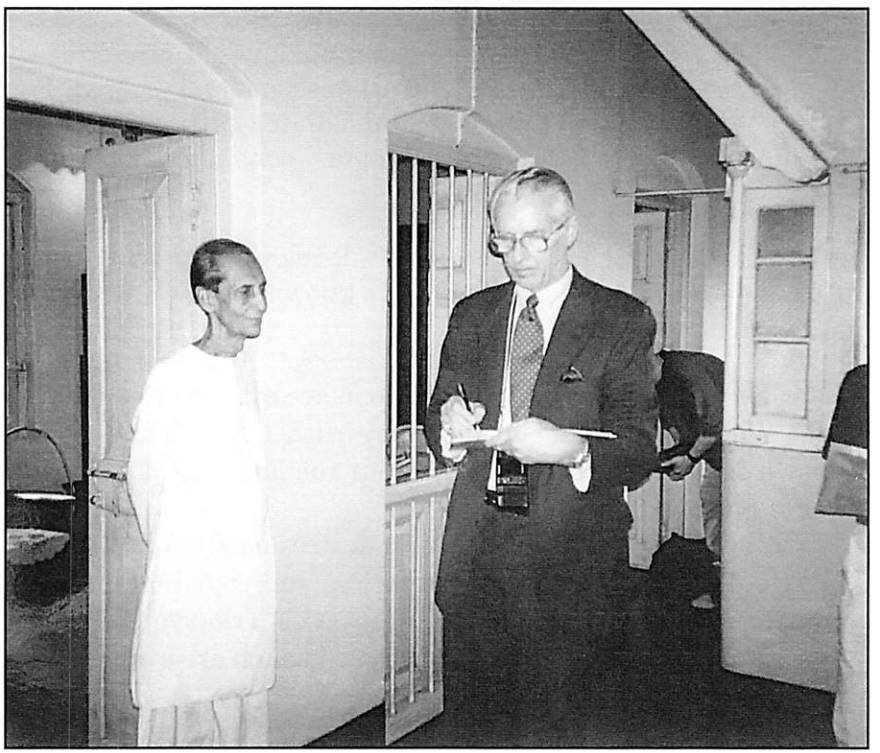
> There is a fundamental purpose for our lives. To recognize it, we must understand where life comes from and where it is going. We must look beyond our immediate goals to what we ultimately want to accomplish. We must consider life's highest potential for development.

What is *your* highest potential for development? What is the ultimate good unto which to aspire? To know the answers to these questions, do these four things:

- Do what you are best qualified to do in accord with your knowledge and abilities and in harmony with natural laws. Your knowledge and skills determine your role in life, your dharma or life-path.
- Learn to have your life-enhancing desires easily fulfilled. Use imagination, wisdom-guided intention, and your inherent and acquired skills to accomplish your purposes. Train yourself to be receptive to the impulses of God's grace which are ever present within and around you.
- Learn to have your real needs fulfilled by the universe. You will always have the full support of cosmic forces when you live in harmony with natural laws.
- Aspire to and awaken to Self- and God-realization and complete liberation of consciousness in the present physical lifetime.

Dutifully adhering to your life path and having life-enhancing desires and real needs fulfilled will enable you to render service to others and the planet and to live without anxiety or undue effort. The ultimate aim of your life in this world is to awaken from ordinary, conditioned states of awareness to Self- and God-realization.

> Creation is governed by laws. The ones which manifest in the outer universe are called natural laws. There are subtler laws which can be known only by yoga [samadhi] practice. The spiritual realms also have their lawful principles of operation.
>
> – *Sri Yukteswar*



Roy Eugene Davis with Hare Krishna Ghosh (Paramahansa Yogananda's nephew), in the upstairs living room of Yogananda's boyhood home in Kolkata, India, now a pilgrimage site for kriya devotees. *February 1997*

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions or inquiries for possible use in a future issue by mail or e-mail ron@csa-davis.org

During kriya [pranayama] practice, if I breathe through my mouth I tend to yawn and air fills my lungs too rapidly. I can do it better when I inhale through the nose, keeping the mouth closed. Is this all right?

Breathing through the partially open mouth is often taught to novice practitioners to make it easier for them to feel the inhaled air against the back of the throat, to create a suction effect in the spine. When you can feel the current moving in the spine, breathe through the nostrils. Yes, practicing kriya pranayama the way you are doing it is all right. Controlled breathing, whether through the mouth or the nostrils, will enable you to regulate the flow of air so that inhalation is neither too fast nor too slow. As your skill improves, the major focus and feeling will be in the spine as the current ascends and descends in accord with comfortable inhalation and exhalation. After kriya pranayama practice, meditate in the silence for a while, then practice jyoti mudra to contemplate inner light and sound (Om).

I have a moderate curvature of the spine and have not progressed with kriya pranayama practice as I would like. What can I do?

An upright, seated posture is recommended when meditating because it helps the meditator to remain alert and attentive and to avoid being too passive or going to sleep. When practicing kriya pranayama, the current of life force flows through subtle channels in the spine. A moderate curvature of the physical spine should not cause any difficulty. Just do the routine, then sit in the tranquil silence and contemplate (focus upon and become aware of) your pure-conscious nature and the reality of God.

Do you know anyone who has experienced kaya kalpa regimens for physical rejuvenation?

I have not met anyone who has experienced that process. (Note to readers: see page 183 in the glossary of *Paramahansa Yogananda As I Knew Him* for more information about kaya kalpa.)

Please elaborate on illusions.

Illusions result when what is thought about or perceived (seen, heard, touched, smelled, or tasted) is inaccurately or incompletely comprehended. We may then, quite innocently, presume that we know what is not yet fully known.

A story: Six blind men were provided an opportunity to acquire knowledge about a tame elephant by touching different parts of the animal's body. One, who felt the trunk, said, "Oh, it is like a large snake." Each of the others, having felt only the tail, a leg, the side, an ear, or a tusk, had different opinions. They believed that an elephant is like a small snake, a tree, the wall of a building, a tent flap, or a polished hardwood pole. Each of the six men acquired only partial knowledge of what an elephant is really like.

Like the men in the story, many people have illusions about what they perceive in this world. Illusions about God are common, and often promoted and defended.

Illusions always have an object—something that is observed—an idea or concept, or a perception of an external thing, event, or circumstance. Hallucinations, self-produced by a disordered or disturbed mind, are not related to a perceived object of attention.

You once wrote: "There is a level of awareness beyond God to be realized." Can you explain more fully?

First, we have to determine what we mean when using the word *God*. I wrote that statement after referring to God as the Godhead or Cosmic Soul, the first outward aspect of Supreme Consciousness (ultimate Reality: absolute, unmodified Existence-Being) which, having manifested itself as the Cosmic Soul, is "beyond" it. The absolute aspect of Consciousness can be experienced but cannot be described because it has no modifying attri-

butes. The Cosmic Soul, that which is commonly thought of as being God, the first emanated aspect of Supreme Consciousness, has characteristics produced by the attributes of sattva, rajas, and tamas (which are produced by the polarities within the field of the Cosmic Soul) without which universes could not be manifested and sustained.

After I leave this realm, I don't want to reincarnate. Life is too difficult here. How can I avoid a future physical incarnation?

When you are enlightened, it will not be difficult to live in this realm. You may, however, eventually decide to withdraw from it, or be required to do so when the body is no longer able to serve your needs. The way to avoid returning to the physical realm, if that is your choice, is to be consciously, spiritually awake without any this-world attachments or aversions. To always be established in Self-knowledge while dispassionately perceiving the realm of nature as a manifestation of cosmic forces is the way to avoid being limited or influenced by it.

How can I keep my mind and awareness more God-oriented?

Cultivate Self-remembrance by being aware of the fact that you are an immortal spiritual being abiding in God. What we consider to be of most value is where our attention naturally flows.

On a few occasions, while meditating without thoughts being active, I experienced what seemed to be a void: "nothingness." This is not what I had hoped for. Is this what one should expect?

What some philosophical systems refer to as a void is awareness of pure being without any supportive perceptions. In the early stages of meditation practice, when thoughts are absent, one may experience a passive, yet still egocentric, state of awareness rather than a vivid superconscious, transcendent state. In either instance, the absence of thoughts, sensations, or perceptions may cause one to feel alone or isolated. In yoga literature, superconscious isolation (kaivalya) is described as the state of conscious, absolute aloneness beyond all attributes and qualities of relative

conditions (conditions which have a relationship with something else). Thoughtlessness is not always superconsciousness. When thoughts are absent during the waking state or the deep sleep state, ordinary self-consciousness may still prevail and awareness may still be blurred.

Some devotees expect superconscious states to be characterized by bliss, joy, or perceptions of light or other subtle phenomena. During preliminary superconsciousness, these perceptions may be had. One may also become attached to them because they are interesting or enjoyable. There is no harm in being interested in or enjoying what is perceived or experienced. It is helpful, however, to be willing to transcend even these states in order to experience the ultimate realization—the reality of pure existence-being devoid of modifying influences. When you become aware of the most refined level of superconsciousness, gently (without forcing the issue) inquire, "Is there anything more I should apprehend?" "What is beyond this level?" Continue, without specific expectations or preconceived notions, until you awaken to complete Self- and God-realization.

When looking into the spiritual eye, how is one to know what is the "real light" rather than light which is the result of brain stimulation?

Any light that is perceived is produced by something. When you close your eyes and look within, you may see brain-produced light. When the eyeballs are gently pressed with the fingers, stimulation of the visual centers in the brain may cause light to be seen. The light of the spiritual eye is produced by upward flowing life forces that converge at the medulla oblongata and are focused at the spiritual eye center. When you see it, flow your attention to it. Use the jyoti mudra technique to contemplate inner light, or be aware of inner light that may spontaneously manifest when you are meditating.

Meditative perceptions of inner light, mental and emotional calmness, and a sense of unification with a larger field of reality are not unlike those which have sometimes been reported by persons who have experienced a near-death episode. It is of interest

to note that many people who have had such an experience say that it radically changed the way they view themselves, improved their relationships, and resulted in a meaningful sense of life-purpose. They often say that it "made them a better person" and removed their fear of death and after-death states.

Some meditative perceptions and sensations are produced by the mind or brain. What you can perceive is not what you are. For this reason, a devotee intent on illumination of consciousness is advised to avoid attachments to subjective perceptions. Although perceptions of inner light and sound (or other subtle perceptions) can be used as objects of concentrated, meditative contemplation, they should eventually be transcended.

In the Vedic tradition, is the "Shiva" aspect of God that which enlightens souls?

The aspects of God referred to as Brahma, expansive; Vishnu, preservative; and Shiva, transformative and renewing, are other than the triune aspects of God as defined in the Christian tradition. The Brahma (God) aspect emanates universes. The Vishnu aspect maintains orderly cosmic processes. The Shiva aspect transforms (changes) so that renewal can occur. These aspects are not gods; they are God's influences. The Shiva aspect is sometimes thought of as pure, unmodified, absolute Consciousness. When a devotee chants *Om Namah Shivaya* ("I reverently acknowledge the one, supreme Reality"), it is that alone to which attention and devotion is directed.

Meditative contemplation on Supreme Consciousness until the illusional sense of selfhood is dissolved, results in enlightenment: the clarification of awareness which allows innate Self-knowledge of one's true nature and the wholeness of Consciousness to be realized.

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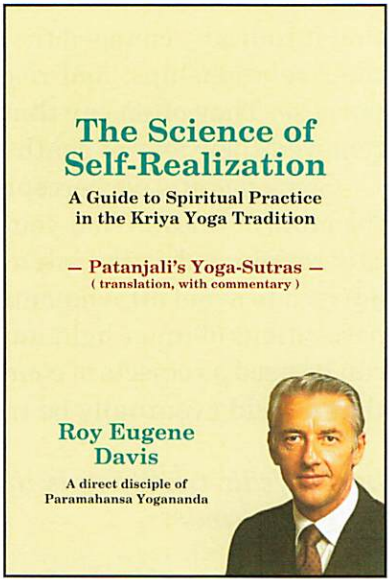
The Science of Self-Realization
A Guide to Spiritual Practice in the Kriya Yoga Tradition
– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras –
(translation, with commentary)
Roy Eugene Davis
A direct disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda

Part One: Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras

Kriya Yoga (disciplined thinking and actions, profound Self-inquiry, and transcending a mistaken sense of self) is taught as a way to weaken and remove conditions that interfere with spiritual awakening and Self-realization. Meditation practices, exceptional powers of perception and extraordinary abilities to be used to nurture spiritual awakening, superconscious states, and stages of awakening to spiritual enlightenment and liberation of consciousness are explained.

sutras— "threads," Sanskrit verb root *siv*, "to sew." Aphorisms, concise statements that may require a commentary of explanation. Patanjali's text was composed two thousand years ago.

Part Two: Shandilya Upanishad

A little known text on Kriya Yoga practices. The inner meaning of the *Bhagavad Gita* is also clearly explained.

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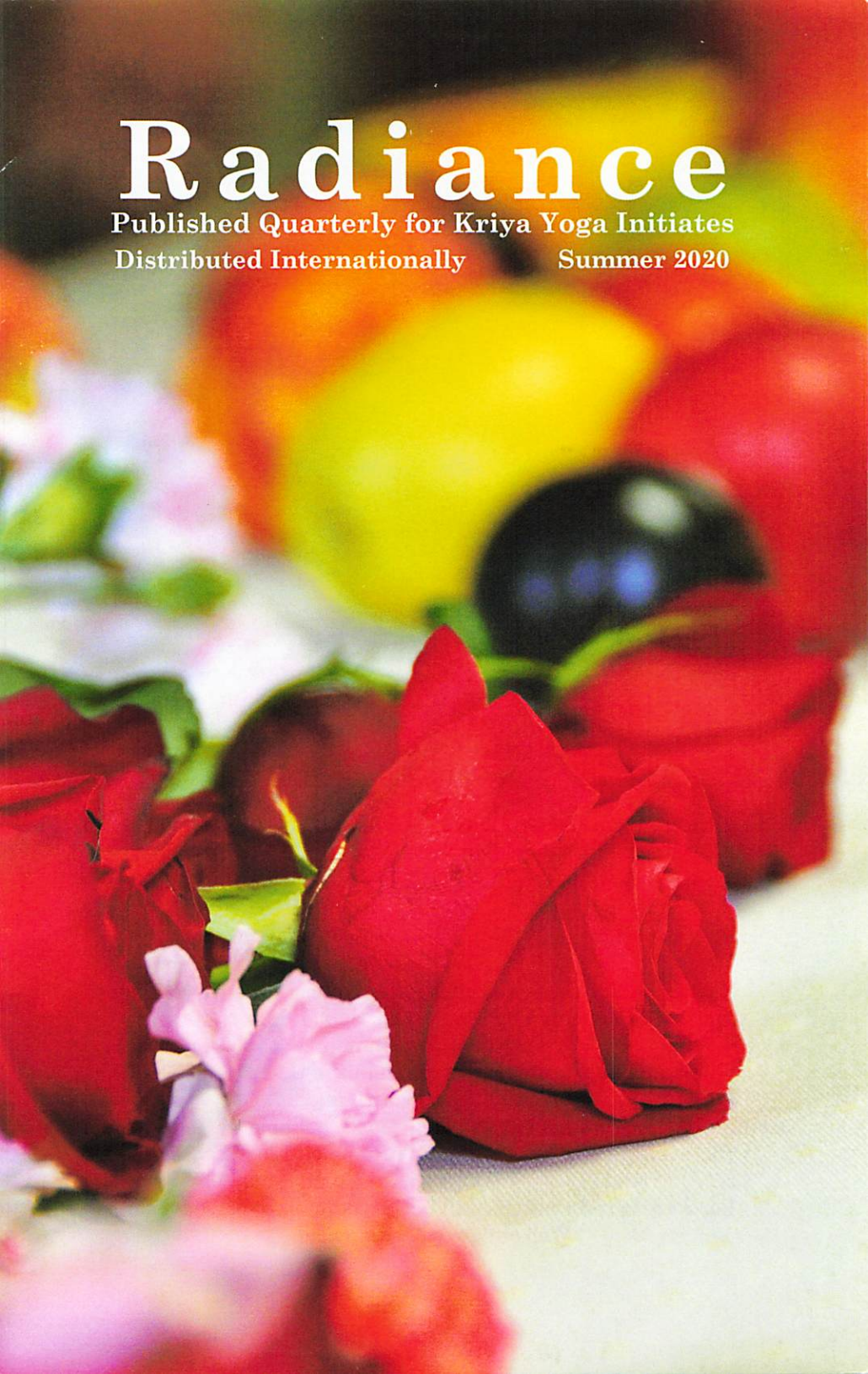

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Roy Eugene Davis conducting a class in the Meditation Hall at CSA headquarters. The hall had been newly dedicated a month before this photo was taken. – *August 1977*

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Kathleen Low, Editor
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The Direct Way to Be Self-Realized

Fluctuations in individualized awareness can be restrained, restricted, and removed [or transcended] by meditation practice and dispassionate nonattachment.

Of these two [ways], concentration on an object is meditation.

Meditation becomes steady by persistent, devoted endeavor.

Dispassionate nonattachment is accomplished by renouncing cravings and instinctual urges.

The highest renunciation results from Self-realization that enables one to disregard and transcend the actions of cosmic forces regulated by the constituent attributes of nature.

– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:12–16

Wavelike movements (vrittis) in our awareness persist so long as subliminal impulses (vasanas) keep them in motion. When the driving forces of subliminal impulses cease, and we remain alert, our awareness is clear.

The two ways of clarifying awareness are 1) concentration on a chosen object; 2) dispassionate (unemotional) detachment which enables us to disregard conditions which might distract our attention. Detachment that prevails when we are established in Self-awareness is superior because it does not require effort. When Self-realization is steady, neither the subliminal influences nor the influences of cosmic forces can disturb our soul peace.

Forces in nature (and in the body and mind) are regulated by three constituent attributes (sattwa, rajas, tamas). Yogis are advised to overcome tamasic (heavy, dulling) influences by engaging in constructive action. When we are not meditating, our actions should be decisive and purposeful. When we are meditating, prayer or the practice of an effective meditation technique can be used. When tamasic influences have been overcome by rajasic actions, sattwic (illuminating, truth revealing) influences can be allowed to prevail. Eventually, the influences of sattwa guna are transcended. While we are established in Self-realization, we are impervious to all external conditions.

If, after meditation, we return to ordinary (conditioned) states of awareness, troublesome influences can be weakened and transcended by choosing to be detached from them. To do this, it is helpful to discriminate between ourselves as beings of pure consciousness, and ordinary states of awareness and external conditions. We can then think, feel, and act freely rather than be influenced by that which we are not.

The Importance of Devotion to the Spiritual Path, Demonstrated by Constructive Actions

Devotion is ardent attraction, loyalty, or faithfulness to the object of our devotion. When we are devoted to a just cause, our attention and actions are involved with it. When we are devoted to spiritual practice, our participation is fervent and persistent. When we are devoted to the ideal of Self- and God-realization, the quick actualization of that ideal is of primary importance. How devoted to the spiritual path are we? It is easy to know the answer:

- What do we think about most of the time?
- To what ends are our actions habitually directed?
- How do we use our knowledge, time, and resources?
- How attentive are we to wholesome living; appropriate, ideal conduct; study of metaphysical principles; and regular practice of superconscious meditation?
- Are we intent on being fully Self- and God-realized in this incarnation? Do our thoughts and actions always confirm our intention?

It is easy to talk about discipleship (dedication to learning and to quickly actualizing our innate potential); what is more important is to live in the right way so that spiritual growth can naturally occur.

Complete Kriya Yoga practice removes all physical and mental obstacles to God-realization (*Yoga-Sutras 2:2*). To be reminded of how to live and how to practice meditation, read chapter two of the *Yoga-Sutras* to determine whether or not your practice of

Kriya Yoga is complete. Our constructive actions (kriyas) do not cause spiritual growth to occur; they allow it to happen as conditions which restrict it are removed.

- Right living nurtures physical and psychological health and creates harmonious environmental circumstances.
- Right meditation practice clarifies our awareness.
- Right kriya pranayama practice refines the nervous system and transforms the brain so that awareness can flow freely.

In his book, *The Holy Science*, Swami Sri Yukteswar wrote that when eight obstacles that restrict natural spiritual growth are removed, because of the forgiving and generous attitude that results, "one becomes able to practice meditation, pranayama, and internalization of attention; and to enjoy a natural life [by fulfilling all desires and getting rid of them]." He defines the eight obstacles as hatred, shame, fear, grief, condemnation (faultfinding), race prejudice, pride of ancestry, and smugness (a small-minded sense of respectability). All of these restrictive conditions are characteristics of egotism: self-centeredness and an inflated sense of self-importance.

Sri Yukteswar explained that adeptship (Self-mastery) can be achieved by purification of the three bodies through which one expresses and by the guru's grace. The physical body can be purified by natural means; the astral body is purified by voluntary acts of devotional self-control such as cultivation of patience and dispassion that calms and pacifies subliminal influences and maintains emotional balance; the causal body is purified by the influence of mantra.

Some natural means to be used to purify the physical body are wholesome living, avoidance of contamination by harmful bacteria or by environmental pollution, internal and external cleanliness, and balanced routines of activity and rest.

Mental and emotional calmness is essential if thinking is to be rational and awareness is to be clarified. Although at the core of our being we are always pure and knowledgeable, when our emotions are unsettled, the mind confused, and our awareness modified or fragmented, our Self-awareness is obscured. Meditate

every day to the stage of superconscious peace and endeavor to maintain that peace when engaged in ordinary activities.

While verbal and mental recitation of a mantra is of value, of superior value is listening to the Om vibration. Before it is heard, various sound frequencies emanating from the chakras in the spine and head may be heard. When attention and awareness are absorbed in the inner sound, emotions and thoughts are more easily ignored and awareness is clarified.

After using the preliminary meditation techniques such as kriya pranayama and the supplemental practices, listening to Om is the final practice.

Grace (Latin *gratia*, good will <*gratus*, pleasing) is the support provided by infinite Consciousness of which we are individualized units. Grace can also flow through the guru and the lineage of gurus—as we are silently influenced by their enlightened consciousness, are receptive to the spiritual force that streams through them, and learn to effectively use the knowledge they have freely given.

It is clear that the direct way to be Self-realized is to aspire to it and to appropriately live so that it can be experienced.

Meditation results in divine revelation. Then out of the reality of one's being arises the perception and realization of the pure Self. Self-realization is conscious perception of our absolute identity with God, the Self-revelation of our true nature by the illumination of our pure consciousness. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Awakening to liberation, the ultimate aim of life is accomplished.
– *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

Disregarding externals, fixing the gaze inward between the eyebrows, harmonizing the breath [prana]; the devotee established in knowledge, whose highest aim is liberation of consciousness, whose senses, mind, and intellect are controlled, from whom desire, fear, and anger have departed, is forever free.
– *Bhagavad Gita 5:27,28*

Commentary

The Essential Practices of Yoga

essential inherent or characteristic, indispensable, necessary.
practice Latin *practicus*, practical. Pertaining to or acquired by application rather than theory, speculation, or ideals.
yoga 1. Sanskrit *yug*, to join or unify. 2. Awareness of oneness with the Infinite field of Consciousness. 3. The means by which Self- and God-realization can be experienced.

Exactly when, in the course of human history, knowledge of yoga emerged in the minds of spiritually inclined individuals and began to be applied, is not known. We do know that these methods have been practiced for at least five thousand years.

The earliest reference to endeavor to control the mind and senses is in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (7th century B.C.E.), although the information was transmitted orally prior to that time. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (3rd or 4th century B.C.E.), it is stated that yoga practices had been taught by a lineage of teachers for thousands of years and that this knowledge emerges when people are receptive to it and submerges when receptivity to it wanes:

Thus received by successive transmission, the royal sages knew this yoga, until, after a long lapse of time, it was lost to the world.
– *Bhagavad Gita 4:2*

Patanjali (circa 200 C.E.), who described in his *Yoga-Sutras* how superconscious states can be experienced, meditation can be effectively practiced, and liberation of consciousness can be realized, also acknowledged the antiquity of yoga:

Now [at this auspicious time], in accord with an established tradition, instruction in yoga begins. – *Yoga-Sutras 1:1*

A practitioner of yoga should know the ultimate purpose of spiritual endeavor to be transcendence of ordinary states of consciousness and the often superficial or self-centered values associated with them. In our current era, of millions of people who practice some form of yoga, only a few are devoted to the ideal of

Self- and God-realization; most are interested only in obtaining physical and psychological benefits and improving their egocentric endeavors and relationships.

The thinking and endeavors of one who aspires to succeed as a practitioner of yoga must go to the core of the matter. An intellectual grasp of philosophical principles must first be acquired and procedures learned and applied. It is most helpful to have an accomplished teacher (guru) with highly developed powers of discernment, practical experience, and proficiency, if not complete mastery, in eliciting samadhi states. A sincere truth seeker must be a disciple (learner). If the capacity to learn and to practice what is learned is absent, involvement with yogic processes is useless.

Yoga Theory and Essential Practice

Four fundamental concepts need to be examined.

1. *The processes that produce and maintain the cosmos.* With this knowledge, illusions cease and the universe is viewed as an interaction of cosmic forces—real because it exists, yet is not as it appears to be to one who is not informed.
2. *The laws of cause and effect (karma)* that keep spiritually unawake souls involved with matter and its processes.
3. *Ultimate Reality.* The pure field of Consciousness from which everything originates and which is to be realized. It is "absolute" because devoid of attributes. Its first projected aspect (the Godhead or Oversoul) has attributes (gunas).
4. *The means by which ultimate Reality can be realized*—yoga practiced in accord with the precise definition of the word: samadhi. All other appropriate yoga practices serve to make the body, mind, and awareness more receptive to transcendent realizations prior to their occurrence and may support those states during early stages of emergence.

The Problem of Suffering, Its Cause and Solution

The primary cause of suffering is lack of Self-knowledge which results from inaccurate or incomplete perception of the essence of being. The erroneous belief that a physical body, or a personality,

is one's real being predisposes a person to be preoccupied with the body or personality, or both. When the body is healthy, there can be psychological suffering. And when both physical and psychological well-being are experienced, fear of change, disability, or death can disturb the mind and emotions. Even when circumstances are ideal, their termination is an eventual certainty which must be acknowledged. What is born, dies. What begins, ends. Nothing in the objective realm is permanent. Confronting facts should not cause us to be pessimistic. To the contrary, knowing that transitory conditions can be "seen through" and transcended should inspire optimism.

The True Self to Be Realized

The essence of our being, the true Self, was individualized because of interactions between the Godhead and the field of primordial nature. At the core, the Self is always pure, serene, and knowledgeable in regard to what it is and its relationship to infinite Consciousness. It is only at the surface of awareness that confusion can exist. An individualized unit of Consciousness identified with matter and mind is referred to as a soul. When the soul becomes overly involved with matter and its powers of discernment are blurred, it mistakenly feels itself to be separate from the one field of Consciousness. The mistaken sense of "I-ness" is referred to as the ego. When the ego is purified, or transcended, awareness of one's true nature in relationship to the wholeness of life is apprehended. The ego should not be confused with *egotism*—an inflated sense of self-importance.

Samadhi and Liberation of Consciousness

The four categories of awareness about which to know are 1) the waking state; 2) the dream state; 3) unconsciousness, as when deep sleep prevails; 4) superconsciousness (including samadhi, of which there can be several stages).

Samadhi differs from hypnotic states. During an episode of superconscious samadhi, awareness is partially or fully identified with an object of attention or is unsupported and free-flowing. Hypnosis is the partial or complete blocking of a flow of attention.

Four stages of samadhi supported by objects of attention:

1. *Comparative.* In relationship to memories and ideas. The meditator is inclined to compare the experience with prior states of consciousness or with what others have said about superconscious states.
2. *Noncomparative.* Without memories or ideas. Attention and awareness is so fully absorbed in the object of meditative contemplation that all sense of "otherness" is absent.
3. *Reflective.* Superconscious examination of subtle essences or aspects of the object being contemplated, with feelings or emotions present. One may inquire into subtle aspects of the mind, intellect, ego, processes of cosmic manifestation, or supreme Consciousness with feeling-response to insights or perceptions one is having. The sense that "I, as the Self, am looking at this" remains.
4. *Super-reflective.* Spontaneously Self-revealed knowledge of subtle essences or aspects formerly examined without any feeling-influence or sense of difference. At this stage, awareness along with knowledge is "Self-shining."

Beyond these stages is existence-being realization without the support of an object of attention. When Self-realization is complete, it permanently persists whether one is meditating or is engaged in normal activities. This final stage is constant, spontaneous Self- and God-realization which progresses to liberation of consciousness.

The various systems of yoga evolved because the capacities of practitioners vary. One person may benefit from a devotional approach (bhakti yoga). Others may be inclined to cultivate powers of discriminative intelligence (jnana yoga), practice hatha yoga, perform duties without mental or emotional attachment to them (karma yoga), or meditate with alert, inspired intention (raja yoga). A balanced, integrated approach is best, in accord with our psychological temperament, mental capacity, physical condition, personal circumstances, and innate urge to have awareness restored to wholeness. If one has a wise teacher, it is easier to choose the most useful course of action.

A rarely seen portrait of Swami Sri Yukteswar,
guru of Paramahansa Yogananda
(1855 – 1936)

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions or inquiries for possible use in a future issue by mail or e-mail ron@csa-davis.org

Why do some teachers recommend using mantras with breathing opposite to the way one breathes when using the "hong-sau" mantra?

There are various ways to use a meditation mantra. Avoid confusion. Use one in accord with your temperament and the results that you obtain. With either hong-sau ("saw"), ham-sa, or so-hum, mentally recite the first syllable when inhaling and the second syllable when exhaling. As you progress, instead of mentally reciting the mantra, mentally "listen" to it. When breathing is very refined and subtle, and attention is internalized, disregard the mantra. Listen to Om without breath awareness.

When initiating students, some Kriya Yoga gurus teach different ways of practicing the basic meditation techniques. Why?

During Lahiri Mahasaya's two-week stay with Babaji, in 1861, he was taught a variety of meditation techniques. Later, when he taught his own disciples, he did so in accord with their capacity to learn and to practice. Although the basic methods are the same for everyone, advanced practices may be adapted to individual needs. Now, more than a century after Lahiri Mahasaya's transition in 1895, kriya gurus either teach as they were taught by their gurus or adapt their instructions to best serve their disciples. If the kriya meditation techniques taught by a knowledgeable guru who is somewhat spiritually enlightened are diligently practiced, they will be effective. A disciple should practice what the guru teaches rather than experiment with methods of other teachers.

Is it ethical (right, proper) for a devotee of God to pray that desires be fulfilled? If it is, what is the most effective way to pray?

Until you are established in Self-realization and are always so

in harmony with the rhythms of life that your desires and needs are fulfilled, you can pray for what you want or need.

Pray until you know and feel that you already have what you wanted or needed. You may be inspired to do something that will assist the fulfillment process. If you don't know what to do, or cannot do anything to satisfy your desires or needs, rely on God and let events, resources, relationships (if necessary to the fulfillment process), and circumstances unfold naturally. The universe can and will provide for your needs when you are in harmony with it.

Don't beg, endeavor to bargain, or demand. Prepare to have your worthwhile, life-enhancing desires fulfilled. Improve your skills and abilities and use them effectively. Expect to have your needs satisfied. When they are, how will you think, feel, and act?

To function more effectively in the physical realm, as often as is necessary remind yourself that the universe, a manifestation of cosmic forces emanated from one field of Consciousness, is whole. Your mind is a unit of God's universal mind which is responsive to your thoughts, mental states, desires, and real needs.

Pray for physical healing, psychological transformation, peace of mind, attitude or behavioral modification, prosperity, success in constructive endeavors, or improved personal relationships. Above all, pray that you will grow spiritually and awaken to Self- and God-realization. Adjust your point of view until you can imagine, see, and feel (at the soul level) yourself as you want to be, then assume that point of view and live in accord with it.

According to what I have been told, and have read, yoga practice expands and clarifies the practitioner's awareness. Although I have been reading books on yoga and practicing various routines for several years, my awareness is not yet enlarged, nor is it very much clearer than when I started.

Expand your awareness by being aware of your true Self as a spiritual being expressing through a mind and body in the infinite field of Consciousness which has no boundaries. The only cause of confinement of awareness is excessive identification with the idea of being an entity independent of that field of Consciousness. Clarify your awareness by orderly, rational thinking and super-

conscious meditation practice. It is not uncommon for a truth seeker to become so preoccupied with metaphysical theories and practice of techniques and routines that they become more egocentric and small-minded instead of expansive, and introverted instead of Self-realized and cosmic conscious. Avoid preoccupation with ideas and practices. Acquire useful knowledge and apply the helpful procedures, then wisely live with enthusiasm. Use your improved understanding and skills to live effectively.

For a dedicated practitioner of Kriya Yoga who aspires to rapid spiritual growth, which is more important or influential: personal endeavor, the help of the guru, or God's grace?

Everything that contributes to spiritual well-being is important. Right personal endeavors are necessary. A disciple should be emotionally mature, willing to assume responsibility for his or her thoughts, feelings, and actions, and fully committed to doing what is necessary to undergo psychological transformation that removes all restrictions to spiritual growth.

If a disciple is receptive and responsive, the guru's instructions, enlightened consciousness, and transmission of spiritual force are helpful. A true guru will only advise a disciple to do that which is for the disciple's highest good. If the disciple resists, or does not put into practice what has been advised, nothing worthwhile will result.

On one occasion, to a disciple who behaved inappropriately, Paramahansa Yogananda said, "Why do you tell others that you are my disciple when you refuse to do what I tell you to do for your own good?"

My guru corrected my behavior two times. Six months after I met him, my early enthusiasm for spiritual practice waned somewhat when I became aware of the fact that much inner transformation was still needed. He put me back on the right course by writing me a brief note. "Roy," he wrote, "You are making yourself unhappy by playing the same old, negative record (my preoccupation with my thoughts) in your mind over and over. Why don't you just break the record?" (At that time, easily breakable phonograph records were still being used.)

Also, during my first year with Paramahansaji, in spite of being mindful of his instructions (that for the first year I should only read his books and a few others that he recommended, and devote most of my time to spiritual practice and God-remembrance), I read a book about another Indian saint whom I knew my guru held in high regard. I soon noticed that my thoughts were preoccupied with that saint and what he had said and done and my meditations were not as deep and satisfying as they had been. When I next visited Paramahansaji in Los Angeles, he looked directly into my eyes and said, "There was a reason why I told you to read only certain books. In a year or two, when your discrimination is more developed, you can read anything and not be confused. Until then, you should do as I tell you."

By attunement to the guru's state of illumined consciousness, the disciple's mind can be cleansed and awareness can be clarified. When the disciple is receptive to the spiritual force flowing through the guru, it can be transmitted. The disciple's spiritual forces are then quickened and begin to circulate more freely. I experienced the transmission of spiritual force from Paramahansaji after a few weeks of being with him. It occurred spontaneously. I could tell by the way he observed me and advised me in regard to my meditation practices that he was fully aware of what had occurred. He would sometimes say to disciples, "I give you everything; you have to be prepared to receive it."

God's grace (the enlivening impulses which are ever expressive in the omnipresent field of Consciousness, and us) supports us and our constructive endeavors even when we are not aware of its actions, causes our spiritual awakening, and makes liberation of our consciousness possible. When we have done all that we can do to assist ourselves to spiritual growth, when we have realized the most refined state of superconsciousness, we have only to surrender any remaining sense of illusional selfhood so that grace can restore our awareness to unflawed, conscious wholeness.

Attend Programs Online

In order to support the safety of our members, while continuing to offer the quality ministry services that Mr. Davis dedicated his life to, you can now participate in CSA programs from anywhere in the world. All times listed are Eastern time zone.

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Visit: www.csaretreat.org
Code: 980 663 1368
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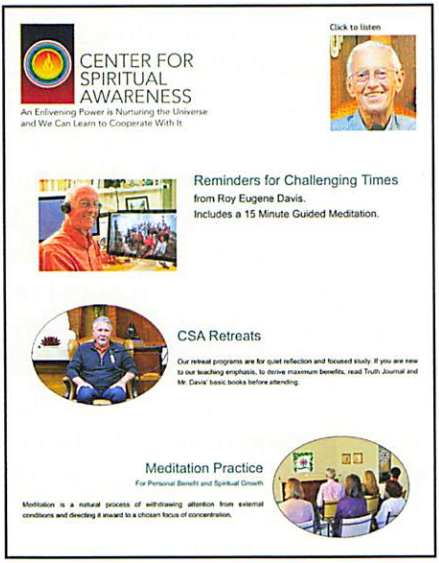
September 26, October 24, November 14, & December 5: 9 am meditation; 10–11 am, 11:15–12:15 pm, and 1–2 pm seminar classes presented by CSA ministers and teachers.

Webinar: Use the link in the CSA email newsletter.

The first Sunday of each month at 2 pm, a webinar with minister Ron Lindahn based on Roy Eugene Davis' book, *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. **www.csa-davis.org**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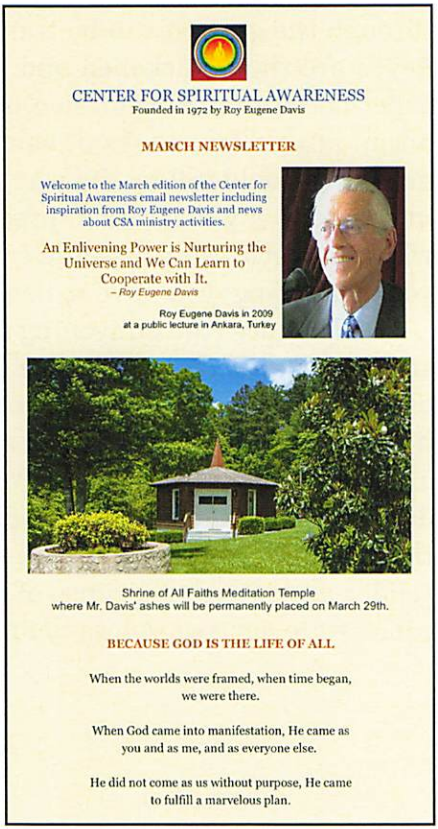
CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
Founded in 1972 by Roy Eugene Davis
MARCH NEWSLETTER
Welcome to the March edition of the Center for Spiritual Awareness email newsletter including inspiration from Roy Eugene Davis and news about CSA ministry activities.
An Enlivening Power is Nurturing the Universe and We Can Learn to Cooperate with It.
– Roy Eugene Davis
Roy Eugene Davis in 2009 at a public lecture in Ankara, Turkey
Shrine of All Faiths Meditation Temple
where Mr. Davis' ashes will be permanently placed on March 29th.
BECAUSE GOD IS THE LIFE OF ALL
When the worlds were framed, when time began, we were there.
When God came into manifestation, He came as you and as me, and as everyone else.
He did not come as us without purpose, He came to fulfill a marvelous plan.

Radiance

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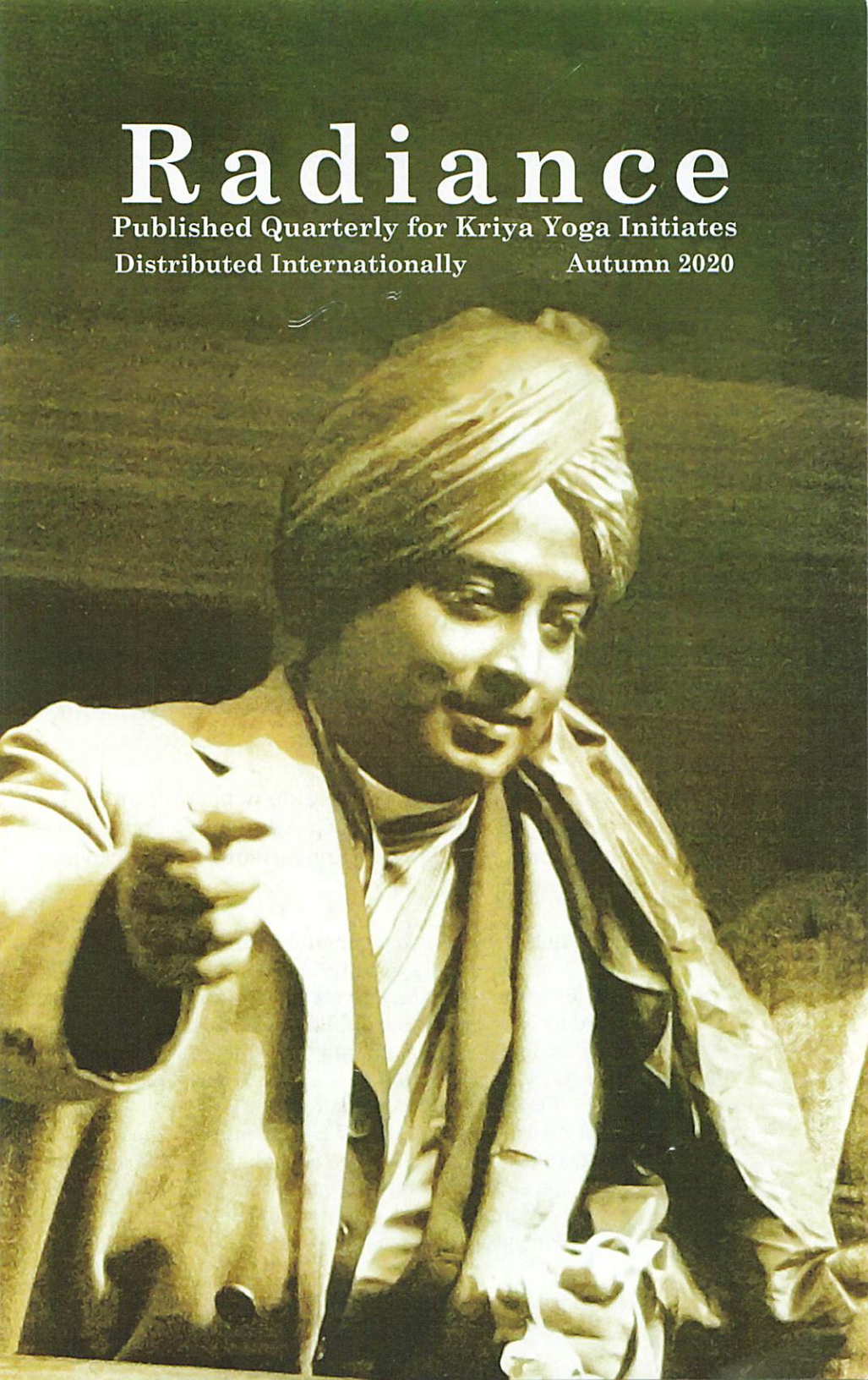

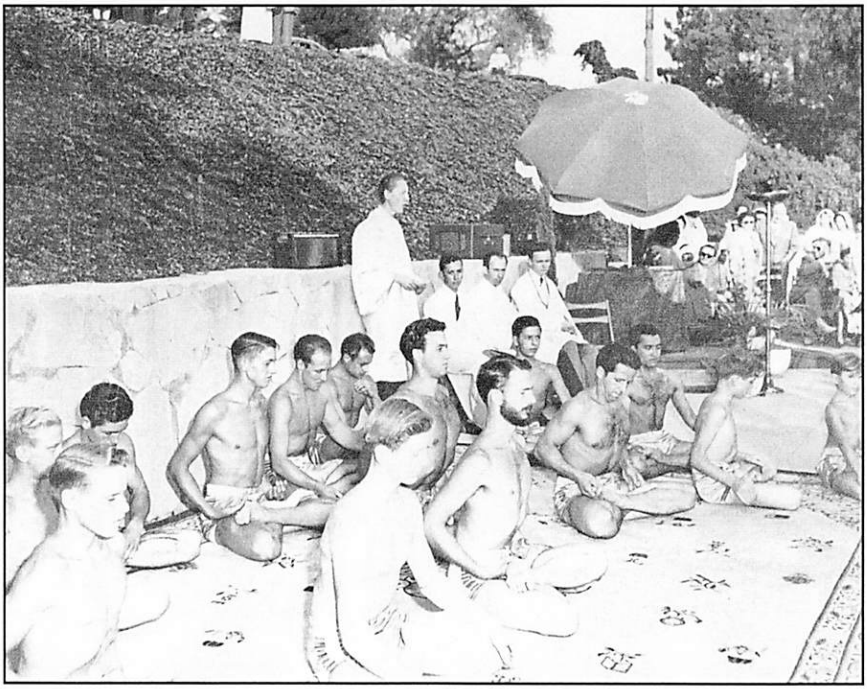

Above: Roy Eugene Davis (next to wall, third from left) with Paramahansa Yogananda (under umbrella) at Self-Realization Fellowship, *1950.*
Front Cover Photo: Paramahansa Yogananda departing in 1924 on a 26 day cruise to Alaska on the ship Admiral Evans. This issue of *Radiance* honors the 100 year anniversary of his arrival in America on September 19, 1920.

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The Importance of Rationality, Consistency, and Perseverance on the Spiritual Path

– Roy Eugene Davis

rational Having or exercising the ability to think in an orderly, logical manner in accord with known facts.

consistent Conforming to the same principles or a course of actions.

perseverance Steadfast adherence to an ideal, belief, purpose, or course of actions.

Rational thinking, consistency in the performance of actions which produce desired results, and unwavering adherence to all that is of real value, are qualities which enhance our lives and enable us to be successful in worthy endeavors. Irrational thinking and behavior, regardless of one's good intentions or dedicated endeavors, can only result in misfortune. In regard to the latter course of action, in his essay, *Self-Reliance*, the nineteenth century New England "transcendentalist" Ralph Waldo Emerson* wrote: "A *foolish* [italics added] consistency is the hobgoblin† of little minds."

Obtain valid (well-reasoned and/or verified by analysis and experimentation) knowledge about your true relationship to the

*Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, and several other original thinkers of their era were said to be transcendentalists because of the lofty philosophical idealism expressed in their conversations and writings. They, and a few of their friends, were avid readers of the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, which had only recently been published in English. The following comment by Louisa May Alcott was in a published collection of her letters and journals: "My definition [of a philosopher] is of a man up in a balloon, with his family and friends holding the ropes which confine him to earth and trying to haul him down."

†In folklore myth, a hobgoblin is described as a mischievous elf, an imaginary, small creature with magical powers, portrayed as delighting in teasing human beings.

Infinite, the natural laws which determine the effects of causes, and how to live effectively, then conform your thinking and actions to it. Until your knowledge is flawless and your actions are always wisdom-directed, continue to learn and to apply what you learn.

To acquire valid knowledge, and to be inspired and motivated, read the writings of spiritually enlightened souls and, whenever possible, listen to their words and experience the nonverbal blessing of their presence.

In my personal interactions with Paramahansa Yogananda (from 1949 to 1952), although his wise words were always helpful, I soon learned that when I was attuned to his state of consciousness and mental states (which he encouraged), I could have direct access to the contents of his consciousness and mind. Behind the facade of his stalwart physical form and attractive personality I discerned a cosmic presence and reality. On one occasion, he confided, "I vanquished Yogananda [identification with name and form] long ago; only God dwells here [in this body] now." *Note: Vanquish* subdue, suppress, overcome.

Often obscured by the veils of matter and mind are realities which are more substantial than those which we ordinarily perceive through the senses or with the intellect. Physical realities are manifested by subtle element-influences (*tattvas*, true essences) emanated from the field of Primordial Nature (Om, the vibration of the power of Consciousness expressing as space-time and cosmic forces regulated by the three constituent attributes or *gunas*).

Note: see "The Categories and Processes of God's Cosmic Manifestation" in the first part of lesson three in *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*.

> Discard the false belief that there is a separation between spiritual and material life. Perform your duties skillfully. All [constructive] work is purifying if done with the right motive. If you sometimes fail to accomplish your purposes, don't be discouraged; that is the best time to sow the seeds of success. In everything you do, express your soul qualities. – *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Renew Your Commitment

Think rationally, remain consistent in the performance of duties, and persevere on the spiritual path.

1. *Examine your life and improve it as necessary:*
   Physical health: [ ] excellent [ ] good [ ] poor
   Habitual mental attitude: [ ] positive [ ] negative
   Habitual mental state: [ ] rational [ ] irrational
   Emotional states: [ ] balanced [ ] erratic
   Awareness: [ ] clear and serene [ ] blurred
   Financial status: [ ] satisfactory [ ] unsatisfactory
   Work that you do or service that you provide:
   [ ] enjoyable and fulfilling [ ] not enjoyable or fulfilling
   Relationships: [ ] supportive [ ] unreliable
   Behaviors: [ ] consistent [ ] variable
   Major purposes: [ ] of real value [ ] of minor importance
   Resolve to accomplish: [ ] strong [ ] medium [ ] weak

2. Write (on a separate sheet of paper or in your journal) what you need to (and will) do to make the necessary, positive changes. Do this when you are alone and quiet, after meditating for a few minutes to become calm and soul- and God-centered.

3. Write your reading and learning projects for the purpose of acquiring knowledge that will enable you to live more effectively and successfully.

_____

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5. Review your meditation practices and routines:
   Also read *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*, and *The Eternal Way*.

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions or inquiries for possible use in a future issue by mail or e-mail ron@csa-davis.org

I have heard that Paramahansa Yogananda told his disciples, "If you are faithful on this path to the end [of your earth life], when you go, I, or one of the gurus will be there to usher you into the Infinite." Can you explain more about this?

He said this to me during one my private visits with him at his retreat house in Twentynine Palms, California, in the early 1950s.

How is this possible, and how can we know that we will have such help and guidance at that time? For me, my guru's words are sufficient. A fully illumined master of yoga, he spoke from his own inner realization and personal experience.

We cannot know which of the gurus (or other saints of our kriya tradition) will be with us when we make our transition from the body because we do not know where they are now. Lahiri Mahasaya left his body in 1895; Sri Yukteswar departed in 1936; Paramahansa Yogananda did so in 1952. We should not think that they are merely residing in the celestial realms waiting for us to summon them when leave this world. They may have other things to do: they may reincarnate, or may transcend the subtle astral and finer causal realms.

To leave the body (at the appropriate time), a kriya initiate can meditatively withdraw awareness from external objects, the senses, emotions, and mental processes, and go through the spinal pathway, upward to the spiritual eye and crown chakra, while aspiring to experience clear awareness and the reality of the wholeness of God. The supportive influences that are needed will then be provided.

The best preparation for eventual transition is to live an orderly, wholesome life, cultivate the virtues, and meditate superconsciously on a regular schedule. Right living results in psycho-

logical health that eliminates mental and emotional confusion. Superconscious meditation results in Self- and God-realization and enables us to explore inner realms of consciousness while embodied.

Which is easier: to practice Kriya Yoga in the physical, or astral realm?

Kriya Yoga (ethical, disciplined living, and meditation) can be most easily practiced when and where one chooses to do it. Physical and astral realms coexist; we may be more aware of the physical realm, yet we also express through an astral body (or soul sheath). Kriya pranayama is actually an astral practice (because of flows of life force and chakra enlivening) that also produces transformative physical effects. If your question is in regard to whether or not Kriya Yoga is easier to practice after one departs from the physical realm: it will be determined by the state of awareness. If one is confused in the astral realm, kriya practices will not be easy, just as practice is not easy in this realm when confusion prevails.

Since God is the sole creator, I don't understand how there can be dual aspects of pure consciousness.

Pure consciousness is not dual; pure consciousness emanates a field of consciousness with attributes (the three gunas) and from that the power of consciousness is projected as the Om vibration. Duality has only to do with relative phenomena; the absolute (pure) aspect of consciousness remains unmodified. Review the processes of cosmic manifestation in *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. If at first you are not able to comprehend the explanation, continue to ponder it until insight dawns, as it eventually will.

Regarding the yamas (refraining from unethical or immoral behaviors): is there a difference between truthfulness and honesty?

A dictionary definition of honest includes "characterized by or exhibiting truthfulness or integrity." An honest person is truthful; a truthful person is honest.

Which hatha yoga asanas are considered to be most useful?

Different teachers have their preferences. It is more useful to practice a few basic asanas in a meditative mood than to be overly concerned about variety or go to extremes. Rather than be too focused on hatha yoga regimens, do them for the benefits that can be derived, and expand your awareness. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* the following postures, which provide a satisfactory routine, are described (with a few variations):

Swastikasana, auspicious; gomukhasana, cow face; virasana, hero; kurmasana, tortoise; kukkutasana, cockeral; uttarkurmasana, stretched tortoise; dhanurasana, bow; matsyendrasana, half spinal twist [in both directions]; paschimottanasana, forward bend back stretch; mayurasana, peacock; savasana, corpse; siddhasana, seated posture of the spiritually accomplished; padmasana, lotus; simhasana, lion; bhadrasana, gracious. (See the Winter 2019-2020 issue of *Radiance*.)

I am not certain that I am practicing kriya pranayama correctly. Can you provide more details that might be helpful?

These (only slightly edited) instructions, in a booklet prepared by my guru which was given to persons who attended his classes, will be helpful:

> The purpose of Kriya [pranayama practice] is to magnetize the spine by circulating life current in and around it, thereby withdrawing the life current from the senses and involuntary organs and concentrating it in the spine. This also helps to change the center of consciousness from the body and senses to the spine.
>
> The spinal column should be imagined as hollow when circulating the life current lengthwise in and around it.
>
> 1. With eyes [and attention] focused at the will center [spiritual eye between the eyebrows in the front region of the brain], concentrate on the spinal column; imagine it to be a hollow tube running from the point between the eyebrows to the base of the spine.
>
> 2. Inhale, feeling the breath moving through the inside of the imaginary hollow spinal canal, with the sound of "aw" [in the

throat], feeling a cool breath and current starting from the coccyx, moving upward until it reaches the top of the tube, going to the point between the eyebrows. The duration of inhalation should be ten to fifteen counts. [Mental counting—1,2,3,4,5, etc.—more fully involves attention with the process.]

When the current and breath have reached the top of the spinal tube, the point between the eyebrows [pause momentarily], slowly exhale, sending the breath and current over the forehead, through the cerebrum, and on down the back of the spinal column to the coccyx. While exhaling, feel the current as a fine, threadlike, tepid (slightly warm) stream slowly going over the spine downward to the coccyx. As you exhale, imagining the current to flow downward over the back of the spine, make the sound of "E" with the breath.

When you inhale and exhale [using this technique], oxygen is quickly converted into life force, especially recharging the lungs and blood. Focusing the vision and will at the point between the eyebrows, and imagining the circulation of the current and breath in and around the spine, will create a positive and negative pole and bring about the actual circulation of this current.

The breath does not actually circulate in and around the spine; the increased life force is directed by will and visualization to continuously circulate through and around the spinal pathway. The five senses are thus disconnected and attention is freed from invasion by the senses.

Keep the throat expanded when practicing [kriya pranayama], like that which is experienced when the tongue is rolled back toward the uvula. You may practice with the tongue rolled back.

You may also practice in the following way. While drawing the cool current upward, mentally chant Om at each of the six centers in the spine [and at the spiritual eye]. During exhalation, mentally chant Om at each center as the warm current flows downward.

(From *Art of Super-Realization: Initiation*; Swami Yogananda, 1930, Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society, Los Angeles, Calif.)

Paramahansa also recommended that the throat be lubricated with ghee or olive oil before practicing kriya pranayama.

The sounds ("aw" and "e") are the quiet sounds that normally occur when inhaling and exhaling air through the throat during kriya pranayama practice.

Pause for a moment after inhalation and after exhalation. New initiates should do 14 continuous repetitions, experimenting until a natural rhythm is established, which is neither too fast nor too slow. With the last inhalation, pull the current into the brain and spiritual eye, hold it there, disregard the breath, and sit for a while in the deep silence. Then practice jyoti mudra and again sit in the deep silence, focused at the spiritual eye and crown chakra, listening to Om.

Once the process is known, diligent, gentle, patient practice will elicit (bring forth) satisfying results.

Initiates who have been practicing kriya pranayama for a year or more may increase the number of repetitions, as many times as may be desired so long as practice is easy and enjoyable. Strain, or inattentive, mechanical practice should be avoided.

Do the gurus in our Kriya Yoga tradition ever ask for or accept money, or anything else, for instruction or for initiation?

The teachers in our tradition do not sell their knowledge or their services or blessings. A person who requests instruction and/or initiation should want to learn, have the capacity to learn, and be willing to practice what is taught. A donation of some kind, to be used for charitable purposes, may be requested by the teacher. This is said to "purify" the student's mind and awareness. By freely giving for a worthy purpose, the student demonstrates willingness to be of service to others. Lahiri Mahasaya asked new initiates to donate 5 rupees (Indian dollars), which were later sent to Babaji in the foothills of the Himalayas, who had some of his disciples use it to provide social or religious services for the people who lived in the villages of that region. Food was distributed, some small temples were built, and religious ceremonies were conducted at public gatherings.

In the 1920s, Paramahansa Yogananda lectured in many major cities in America to large audiences on a donation basis. A fee of $25 was asked for the series of five evening classes that

This photo was taken of Paramahansa Yogananda in New York City when he began lecturing across America in the 1920s

were presented after the public lectures. The money was used to pay the costs of renting an auditorium and newspaper advertisements that attracted the students. I am sure that sincere individuals who could not afford that amount (a considerable sum for the average working person of that era) were allowed to donate in accord with their available means or were invited to attend free. While students and initiated disciples are encouraged to support, as needed, a guru's teaching endeavors, it should be understood that there can be no material compensation for what the guru teaches (and may silently transmit in accord with the disciple's intellectual and spiritual receptivity). If a student does not have much money, useful service of some kind can be selflessly performed for the benefit of someone or for the public good. One who is intent on the spiritual path should learn to generously give as well as to receive.

Emulating the example of the gurus of our Kriya Yoga tradition, I teach freely. A donation is accepted for the ministry; not for my personal use. All who cannot afford to donate are warmly welcomed and generously served. God is the source of all good and the only real doer of worthwhile deeds.

May I use creative imagination to nurture my spiritual growth?

Yes. Aspire to spiritual growth. Imagine what it will be like when you are enlightened: Self- and God-aware, with complete knowledge of your real nature and of cosmic processes. Imagine the freedom you will have, how you will see and experience the world and what you will do. Feel your vital forces freely circulating. See yourself as an immortal, spiritual being expressing in a vast field of conscious life that has no boundaries. Know that your thoughts are interacting with God's cosmic mind, that your actions are always appropriate, and that God's grace always supports you. When you meditate, do so with intention and keen interest. When you use imagination like this, you are not trying to make anything happen; you are making yourself receptive to what is possible for you to experience.

Addendum

Roy Eugene Davis' Reflections on Fifty-Two Years of Discipleship and Fifty Years of Ministry Service – *January 2002*

I met Paramahansa Yogananda early in the evening on December 23, 1949, was accepted for training on Christmas day, formally accepted as a disciple a few weeks later, and ordained to represent this Kriya Yoga tradition in the autumn of 1951. Since meeting my guru, I have devotedly adhered to this enlightenment path.

When Paramahansaji accepted me as a disciple, he asked me to kneel before him, then put his hand on my head and quietly spoke these words: "When Sri Yukteswar accepted me, he said, 'I promise you my unconditional love. Can you pledge that same [kind of] love to me?' " After a pause, Paramahansaji continued, "Roy, I pledge you my unconditional love. Can you pledge that same [kind of] love to me?"

Awed, and thankful, I immediately said, "Yes."

That is our bond which has not changed. A few months later, at Twentynine Palms, California, my guru informed me that our meeting was a renewal of a guru-disciple relationship that had been established in a previous incarnation. Although I had intuitively known this, his words were reassuring.

Since then, more than half a century has passed, and fifty years of ministry have been experienced. After my guru left this world, I was the minister of the Self-Realization Fellowship Center in Phoenix, Arizona, for two years, and then served two years in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. During that time I taught a few individuals how to meditate and initiated one man who later became a CSA member and has been with us for many years.

In 1956 I began to lecture, teach classes, and write. As the years unfolded, I presented programs in cities small and large in many regions of the United States. In 1964 I visited Japan for the first time, sponsored by Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi, who was the spiritual head of the two million-member Seicho-In-No (Home of Infinite Life, Truth, and Abundance) movement in that country. In the early 1970s, I moved to Lakemont and founded our current work, which continues to flourish. During the past three decades,

our ministry-influence has been extended all over the world: with exceptional impact in West Africa, Europe, and now India.

When I reflect on what has occurred through the years, as a result of my endeavors and God's grace, I clearly remember the words that Paramahansaji spoke to me late one night in early January, 1950. I happened to be in the basement of the SRF headquarters building when he walked into the hallway, accompanied by Faye Wright [*Daya Mata 1914–2010*], her sister, and another woman. After speaking with me for a minute or two, he went to the elevator to go upstairs. After the elevator door closed, he opened it again, looked deeply into my eyes, and said, "You have a wonderful future, Roy." Still looking into my eyes, as the door closed he gently said, "Good night, Roy." I remained alone there for several minutes before going to my room to meditate.

Whenever I was with him, I felt a transmission of his vital force into my body and mind. When I learned to attune my mind and awareness with his, as he encouraged me to do, when we were separated by miles, the flow of spiritual force from him and the lineage of gurus through him, was always felt—and still is.

In regard to teaching Kriya Yoga, Paramahansaji spoke of the need for both quantity and quality: informing as many people as possible about the teachings while working with sincere devotees who are committed to discipleship. The CSA ministry is like this: while we reach out to encourage people to live a God-centered life regardless of their level of interest, our major emphasis is to teach Kriya Yoga practices to persons who are receptive to them and offer initiation.

Through the years, hundreds of thousands of people have attended my lectures and classes and read my books, and at least ten thousand have been initiated. Of those whom I have initiated, fewer than one thousand have continued to practice or remain in contact. Even so, I continue to serve because it is my spiritual duty. And, as my guru said in regard to his work, at least some spiritual seeds have been planted in the soil of the minds of those who were served—which may later sprout and grow, and be of benefit to them.

Our ministry service is karma yoga, performed selflessly. I would like to see more kriya initiates remain committed to this

path and be strongly supportive of it. Our way, however, is not coercive: we do not endeavor to persuade anyone to do anything they are not inspired to do. We invite participation; we do not demand it. It is my wish that kriya initiates be attentive to living a good, purposeful life, adhere to their spiritual practices, grow quickly through the stages of spiritual growth in accord with their capacity to do so, and fully awaken to Self- and God-realization.

To paraphrase my guru's words: A spiritual organization is the hive; God is the honey. If the honey of God is not there, the organization has no real value. Our ministry is of real value because it is God-centered.

I am sometimes asked about the future of our work. It will be what it will be in accord with our right endeavors and God's grace. I will never retire from active ministry service—I will continue to serve until I can no longer do it. What I do is not a job; it is my destined duty to represent our Kriya Yoga tradition as a guru-successor to my guru. Gurus are not employed by an organization and sent into retirement. An organized work is an extension of the guru's consciousness and vision. Spiritual force flows from the guru to the people who are being served. An organized endeavor is useful only as it serves as a vehicle through which spiritual force can flow.

Paramahansa Yogananda (center) at the Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine dedication. Roy Eugene Davis attended (far right in photo). – Los Angeles, California, August 1951

Attend Programs Online

In order to support the safety of our members and staff, the CSA Retreat Center in Lakemont, Georgia will be closed for the rest of 2020.

We will continue to offer the quality ministry services that Mr. Davis dedicated his life to by conducting online classes. You can now participate in CSA programs from anywhere in the world. All times are Eastern time zone.

Retreats: You can participate using Zoom.

Visit: www.csaretreat.org
Code: 980 663 1368
Password: 957607

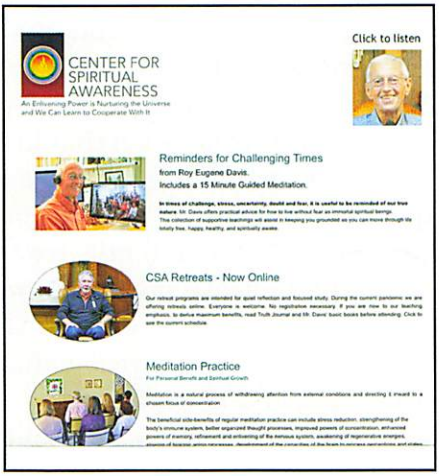
- **Sunday meditation:** 11 am
- **Fall retreat Saturdays**

September 26, October 24, and November 14:
9 am meditation; 10–11 am, 11:15–12:15 pm, and 1–2 pm seminar classes presented by CSA ministers and teachers.

Saturday, December 5:
Holy Season Meditation
online. 10 am – 1 pm

Webinar: Use the link in the CSA email newsletter.

The first Sunday of each month at 2 pm, a webinar with minister Ron Lindahn based on Roy Eugene Davis' book, *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. **www.csa-davis.org**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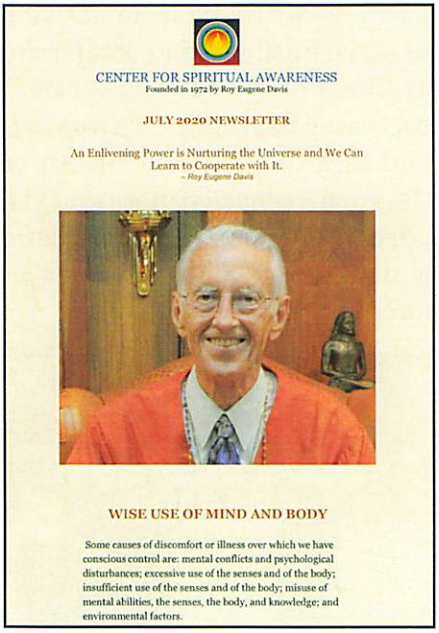
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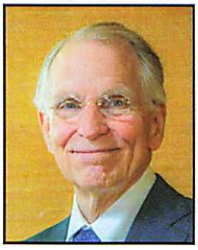
– Roy Eugene Davis
WISE USE OF MIND AND BODY
Some causes of discomfort or illness over which we have conscious control are: mental conflicts and psychological disturbances; excessive use of the senses and of the body; insufficient use of the senses and of the body; misuse of mental abilities, the senses, the body, and knowledge; and environmental factors.



Ron Lindahn

Radiance

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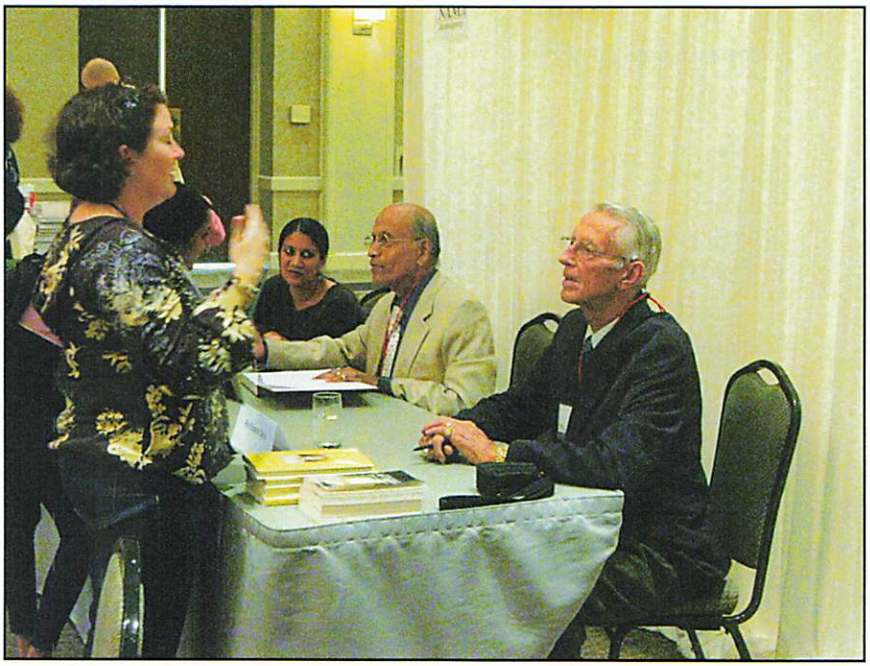

Roy Eugene Davis signing books and visiting with students at an Ayurvedic conference in Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Vasant Lad, from the Ayurvedic Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is seated next to Mr. Davis. – *June 2008*

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What Is Your Highest Aim?
– Roy Eugene Davis

"I was long enslaved by the dreaded enemy [ignorance] which robbed me of my wealth of wisdom. But now, by God's grace and through my own excellent self-endeavor, I have attained wisdom. By Self-knowledge the shadow ego-sense has been expelled. Rid of the poverty of delusion, I remain supremely free. All that is worth knowing is known. All that is worth seeing has been seen. I have now attained *that* beyond which there is nothing to be attained." – *Yoga-Vasishta**

Not all people who are spiritually asleep have chosen their state of ignorance (lack of knowledge). Many of them are not even aware of the possibility of being other than they are. Devotees—individuals who have been informed about their true nature and how to apprehend and experience it—are different. If a devotee is not rapidly awakening through the stages of spiritual growth, the underlying cause is lack of will and aspiration supported by diligent endeavor.

- Are you aiming high? Or are you satisfied with mediocrity (below average [normal] performance and circumstances)?
- Is your spiritual progress slow, medium, or fast?
- Are you focused on the Kriya Yoga discipleship path?
- Is awakening to complete Self- and God-realization first on your list of purposes to accomplish?
- Are you primarily interested in: a) being problem-free and having a comfortable, ordinary life; b) having an abundance of

* The literary work known as *Yoga-Vasishta* (Vasishta's Yoga) is attributed to Valmikim (circa 10th century) who composed the Ramayana. It consists of an imagined dialogue between the teacher Vasishta and the disciple Rama.

material things; c) acquiring information about higher realities only for the purpose of satisfying your curiosity or to fulfill desires; d) being fully enlightened in this incarnation.

It is not necessary to deny yourself the basic needs you have. A devotee of God *should* be problem-free, comfortable, prosperous, and knowledgeable in order to live effectively. It is important, however, that spiritual growth not be neglected because of obsessive preoccupation with matters which relate only to physical and emotional well-being.

Kriya Yoga Practice Should Expand and Clarify Soul Awareness

The obvious results of attentive Kriya Yoga practice are clarification and expansion of soul awareness. If a devotee is frequently confused or habitually provincial (small-minded), Kriya Yoga is not being correctly practiced.

Correct Kriya Yoga practice includes modification of mental attitudes and personal behaviors, insightful analysis of cosmic and individualized Consciousness (God and soul), meditation to the stage of superconsciousness, and renunciation (letting go) of the illusional sense of selfhood. Wholeness (yoga) can then be realized. Weak or erratic attempts to regulate thoughts, emotions and behaviors are ineffective. Superficial study of the nature of Consciousness is of little value. Meditation practiced while being fixated on the mechanical practice of a technique or practiced only to create a pleasant mood does not elicit superconscious states. Inability or refusal to allow the ego to be purified and transcended prevents otherwise rightly motivated endeavors from being effective.

It is known that the majority of Kriya initiates in America, Europe, India, and other countries are habituated to middle-class mental attitudes and behaviors. Though they are usually sincere, their habits of thinking and behaving tend to confine their awareness and determine their actions. For most of them, the major challenge is to acknowledge and outgrow their soul-restricting personality characteristics.

Devotees who are not willing or are unable to experience psychological transformation tend to dramatize excessive emotional dependency in personal relationships and when thinking about or relating to God or to gurus (teachers). They often have difficulty when attempting to comprehend abstract philosophical concepts or the reality of states of awareness other than those with which they are familiar. A common trait is that of trying to adapt clarified states of awareness to their conditioned states: wanting to be Self-realized without having to change their opinions, viewpoints or behaviors. They usually prefer to believe rather than know, to take rather than give, to strive rather than attain, to hope rather than be accomplished, to make excuses rather than achieve, to follow rather than lead, and to be consoled by the supportive companionship of others whose psychological traits and personal behaviors are similar to their own.

At public gatherings Paramahansaji would sometimes say (with gentle humor), "We are all a little crazy [different from what is considered to be normal, infatuated with personal interests], but we don't always know it because we tend to associate with others who are like us."

Strong, sentimental attachment to habitual modes of feeling, thinking, and behaving is a major obstacle to spiritual growth. Unless a spontaneous, transformative conversion event occurs, or one is resigned to the fact that beneficial change requires surrendering self- (egocentric) will, along with its companion-characteristic mental perversity, endeavors to nurture spiritual growth will be futile. The wise words of enlightened teachers will not be understood. Grace will not be able to nourish the soul. The devotee will wander through space and time, confused as though in a dream, dimly aware of the existence of a higher order of reality where peace, knowledge, and harmony prevail, yet unable to experience it.

Peruse the New Testament, the Bhagavad Gita, or other literary works in which conversations and behaviors of truth-knowers and people whose states of awareness are ordinary are portrayed. Notice the difference between what is taught and what is misunderstood. Notice the resistance to learning and

change, a common characteristic of people who are addicted to spiritual ignorance, unable to comprehend what is said or unwilling to help themselves.

Read the Bhagavad Gita and Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras, the two basic texts* for all kriya yogis, on a regular schedule. Part one of the Yoga-Sutras describes how Samadhi (superconscious states) can be accomplished. The basic practices of Kriya Yoga are described in part two. Saturate your mind and awareness with these teachings and live them to the best of your ability.

On one occasion my guru gave me instructions in regard to conducting classes at the Self-Realization Center in Phoenix. Emphasizing the importance of including a "long and deep" meditation practice session at each public gathering, he said, "Dye them in the wool of Kriya Yoga! They will have personal experience and benefits that will change their lives!"

Paramahansaji believed that while an organized endeavor to spread and perpetuate these teachings was necessary the emphasis should be to help souls be Self- and God-realized. He often said "A [spiritual] organization is the hive; God is the honey. Without the honey of God, the hive is without value."

**The Eternal Way:* The Inner meaning of the Bhagavad Gita. The Yoga-Sutras are published in *The Science of Self-Realization* and *The Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*.

Clear your mind of dogmatic theological ideas,
let in the fresh waters of divine perception.
– Lahiri Mahasaya

The Spirit of God sustains every form and force in the universe; yet It is transcendental and aloof in the blissful, uncreated void beyond the worlds of vibratory phenomena. Those who awaken to Self-realization on earth live a similar twofold existence. Consciously performing their work on earth, they are immersed in an inward beatitude. *– Sri Yukteswar*

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions or inquiries for possible use in a future issue by mail or e-mail ron@csa-davis.org

For several weeks after being initiated I was able to experience superconscious states when meditating. Now, I am seldom able to do so. Do you have any comments regarding this?

It is common for exceptional meditation perceptions to be experienced during the early stages of practice when interest is at a high level and a new rush of enthusiasm temporarily overwhelms and subdues subliminal tendencies. After a few weeks, or months, when one settles down and endeavors to integrate spiritual practices with daily duties and interactions with others, subliminal tendencies again become influential and attention wavers. With continued, patient practice, you will eventually be able to elicit superconscious states at will. There will also be a more obvious expansion of awareness which will enable you to comprehend the reality and depths of the wholeness of Consciousness. You are eternally in God. The unveiling of your intuition and clarification of awareness that allows this fact to be realized will progressively occur as you persist with your studies and spiritual practices.

Several of my brother disciples, whom I knew in the early 1950s, who experienced quick and sometimes dramatic results during the first several months of meditation practice, lost interest in the spiritual path or were distracted from it because of their lack of devotional ardor and self-discipline.

Is it necessary to live near a guru to have an attunement with him or her? How do gurus attune themselves with us? Is physical contact necessary to transmit grace?

The most beneficial attunement is with God. Attunement with a guru's awareness is only a point of contact with God; physical proximity is not necessary. Nor is physical contact nec-

essary for the transmission of blessings. A guru may establish a mental and spiritual connection with receptive disciples by thinking of them.

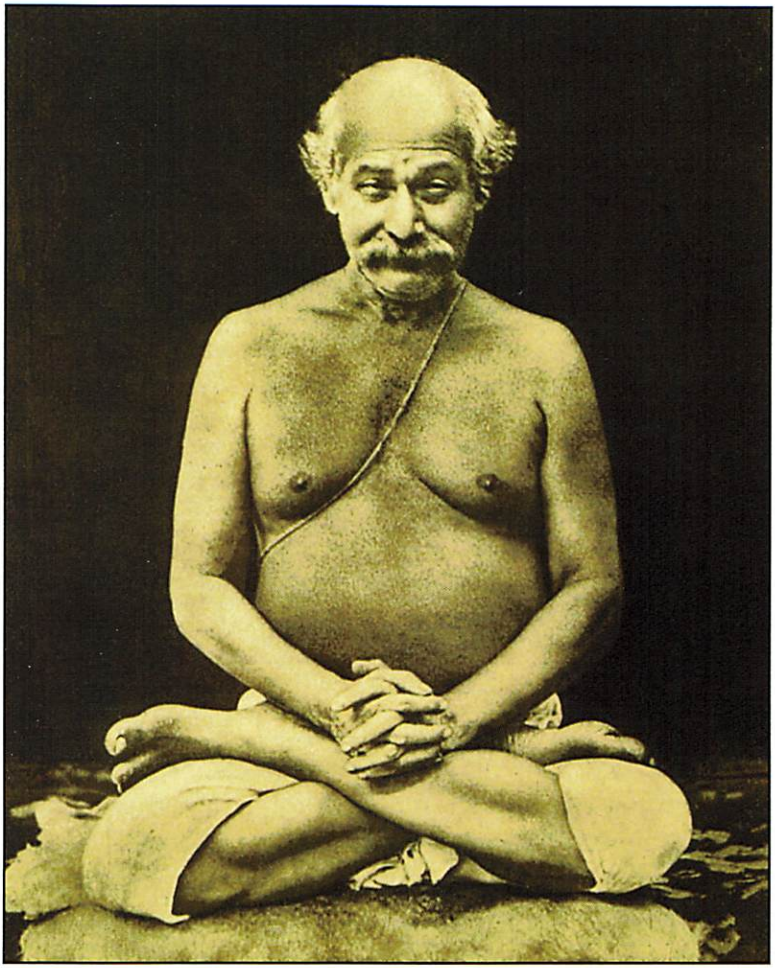
I enjoy my sadhana [spiritual practice], however, I am becoming "other-worldly." I prefer to think about metaphysical ideas and spiritual growth possibilities most of the time and am not overly interested in ordinary, mundane matters. Is this normal? If not, how can I be more balanced?

It is good (beneficial) to enjoy spiritual practice and to always be aware of our relationship to the Infinite. It is also important to live wisely and effectively. Yes, it is normal for a devotee of God not to be overly attracted to matters which appeal to people whose lives are determined by their whims and conditioned tendencies.

Continue your spiritual practices. Cultivate Self-awareness and awareness of God's presence. Appropriately relate to others. Focus your attention and actions on activities and projects which are of real value. Learn to live freely and enjoyably in the world without strong attachments or aversions. Remember that the reality of God extends fully to this earth plane.

A metaphysical ("beyond" the physical) understanding enables us to intellectually and intuitively comprehend the wholeness of life: to know that one Consciousness is expressing as everything. We can then easily choose to relate to all that is wholesome and spiritually elevating while disregarding what is not. People who are not yet spiritually awake, or whose aspiration to spiritual growth is not yet fervent, are inclined to allow their habits, moods, and self-centered desires to rule their lives. Allow others the right and freedom to live their lives in accord with their choices or their fate (karmic influences).

At the spiritual eye, the light of God shines. This is the inner door that leads the soul's awareness into the realm of the divine glory of God. God dwells in each person, and can be known when one enters the sanctuary of pure, illumined consciousness. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*



Lahiri Mahasaya (*1828 – 1895)*

Have you considered reprinting some of your older books?

My currently available books represent what I want to communicate. We occasionally receive inquiries about out of print titles. The basic information in my earlier books is also in my current ones. A publication, written in the year 2000 and recommended to everyone, is *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*: a progressive program of higher learning and spiritual practice in the Kriya Yoga tradition. Along with much useful information, many quotations from the writings and teachings of the gurus of this Kriya Yoga tradition are included. [*Note: Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*, second revised edition was published in 2013 and is available from CSA Press, $7.00.]

When practicing yoni mudra, at which chakra should one concentrate attention when mentally chanting Om—the spiritual eye or the crown chakra?

In yoga texts, the supplemental meditation technique used after kriya pranayama practice is usually referred to as *yoni* (the pathway through which one is born) *mudra* (in this instance, a method of regulating flows of life force). Some yogis refer to it as *jyoti* (light) contemplation. It is practiced by drawing a current of life force upwards through the spine to the brain when inhaling, restraining the breath (not with force or strain), and mentally chanting Om while gazing into the spiritual eye between the eyebrows. Awareness is usually in the higher brain; attention is directed to the spiritual eye center. When it is necessary to resume breathing, one is advised to continue to gaze into the spiritual eye, exhale, let the breathing rhythm be restored to its normal flow, then repeat the process. This can be done two or three times. After doing the technique, disregard the breath and remain focused at the spiritual eye. Continue to mentally chant Om for a while, then listen to Om and merge awareness in it.

Manifest plainness. Embrace simplicity.
Reduce selfishness. Have few desires.
– *The Way of Lau-Tzu (600 B.C.E.)*

Does the ability to look into the future to determine the number of years one has left in this incarnation come with Self-realization? Are there ways to develop that ability?

When one is Self-realized (and before), glimpses of future possibilities can be perceived. The time of transition from the body is not predetermined. A variety of factors can be involved: the inclination to die; behaviors which contribute to health or illness; and lifestyle circumstances, whether life-supportive or life-threatening.

Healthy, long physical life has value because it enables us to accomplish our purposes while we are alert and functional. Premature death of the body is a nuisance (a bothersome inconvenience) that interferes with our innate urge to live consciously and purposefully. For the average person who is only partially aware, incidents of physical death (and possibly rebirth) are of little consequence; their awareness is dreamlike. For one who aspires to illumination of consciousness, transition from the body when work in this realm is completed is viewed as an interesting learning experience. Many yogis leave the body too soon because of neglecting to use the life-knowledge they have to maintain their health or because of disinterest.

Even when indications of possible physical demise are observed, new causes may be implemented to neutralize the effects of past actions and extend the duration of life in this realm. The best preparation for eventual transition from the body is right living and superconscious meditation practice. It is also helpful to understand that, even as we awaken from all involvements with relative phenomena, we live in eternity. There is no spiritual value in departing from the body before awakening to Self- and God-realization.

What are the "yogoda" exercises which Paramahansaji taught to Mahatma Gandhi, as mentioned in Autobiography of a Yogi*?*

Before coming to America [in 1920] Paramahansaji devised an exercise routine for energizing the body, using mild tension and relaxation of muscles along with the visualizing of soul force

flowing from the medulla oblongata at the base of the brain. See *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* (chapter four) for instructions in how to practice. Yogoda Sat Sanga is the name of the Indian branch of Self-Realization Fellowship.

The word *yogoda*, innovated by Paramahansaji in 1915, was originally used as a name for his comprehensive health and physical development system shortly before he established a residential school for boys. *Sat* means "truth of being." Although the literal meaning of *sanga* is "attachment," the word is commonly used to refer to a social gathering. A *sat sanga* is a gathering of truth seekers. It is of interest to note that while bringing together of devotees for the purpose of mutual encouragement and meditation practice is often recommended, spiritually advanced yogis say that because awakening to Self-realization is an inner process, dependance upon social interaction is to be avoided. Excessive socialization distracts attention from important matters, contributes to restlessness, and dissipates vital forces. When Paramahansaji met with groups of devotees at small, informal gatherings or at larger public meetings, he always talked about God and the importance of right living and spiritual practice, led a guided meditation session, and advised everyone to maintain their meditative peace when they departed.

How can a kriya initiate estimate the approximate number of years it will take to become Self-realized provided that the prescribed number of pranayamas are regularly practiced?

There is no way to know when one will be Self-realized. I have known of kriya yogis who (they said) had practiced more than a million kriya pranayamas, who were not Self-realized. Other devotees have awakened quickly, with or without knowledge of these meditation techniques. Kriya pranayama, correctly practiced, refines the nervous system and enables superconscious states to more easily be experienced. Right use of meditation techniques does not cause Self-realization; the effects of practice restore awareness to wholeness. While practice of kriya pranayama causes constructive changes to occur in the body and weakens the influences of subliminal tendencies, to obtain opti-

mum benefits, sit in the deep silence after practice, then retain your meditation-produced calmness when not meditating. By self-training, learn to always be established in soul- and God-awareness.

*According to Paramahansa Yogananda (*Autobiography of a Yogi, *chapter 26, The Science of Kriya Yoga), the six lower chakras (the spiritual eye and five centers in the spine) are said to correspond to the twelve signs of the zodiac. What are the relationships and their significance? As I understand the teaching, the spiritual eye is related to the real Self; the medulla oblongata is related to the ego which is to be dissolved into the spiritual eye center.*

I do not know of any specific relationship or significance in regard to the theory of correspondence of the chakras to the zodiac. The statement may be symbolic. I will look into this matter and write about it later if I discover valid information.

It can sometimes be observed that ego-fixated people often have their awareness centered at the base of the skull. This can be noted by the way they tilt their head slightly upward, possibly indicating arrogance and resistance to new ideas. When awareness is focused in the spiritual eye, egotism (an exaggerated sense of self-importance) tends to diminish. Some devotees experience a degree of confusion and disorientation when ego-identity becomes weak before they are established in Self-awareness (which is why they may cling so tenaciously to it).

What is the specific definition of the word ashram?

The word is derived from Sanskrit *shrama*, to exert. An ashram is a place, usually quiet and secluded, where people can go to apply themselves to higher learning and spiritual practice. Ashrams are also the four stages of life through which to progress. 1) Acquiring a well-rounded education when young (including knowledge of spiritual realities). 2) Fulfilling family and social duties and obligations during early adulthood and middle age. 3) Retirement from unnecessary secular involvements after duties and obligations have been fulfilled. 4) Withdrawal from secular activities and relationships to concentrate exclusively on becom-

ing established in Self- and God-realization before departing from this world.

Is there historical evidence of Krishna who is revered by many people as a God-realized soul?

Very little. According to scholars, several "Krishnas" are mentioned in various texts written over a period of several hundred years, starting perhaps as early as 800 B.C.E. and two distinct story-traditions can be discerned. 1) A Vasudeva-Krishna, a warrior-prince who helps the Pandava brothers in a war against their cousins (see the introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita in *The Eternal Way* or in *The Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*) is portrayed as an incarnation of the qualities of the aspect of God which restores and preserves the cosmic order and who teaches a syncretistic (reconciliation of various beliefs) path of devotion and yoga practice. 2) A cowherd (Gopala) Krishna who as a child is mischievous, plays a flute to attract and innocently flirt with the young cowherd girls (gopis), and eventually chooses one of them (Radha) to be his wife. Most of the stories are symbolic, and describe a variety of interactions between Spirit and the field of nature.

In the epic Mahabharata ("great story of the descendents of Bharata") of which the Bhagavad Gita is a part, Krishna is described by the author Vyasa ("the Arranger") as an avatar, an embodiment of divine qualities, who appears on the scene to restore virtue to the world. His words, spoken to Arjuna, represent the wisdom of the soul that is being Self-revealed.

Accounts of the young cowherd version of Krishna also emphasize his divine characteristics. In one story, when his mother made him open his mouth to see if he had been eating the butter she had recently churned, she saw instead endless space in which the cosmos was floating.

In 1950, just after Paramahansaji assisted me to see a brilliant white light and a dark blue field in the spiritual eye center, he said, "What you saw a moment ago represents Krishna and Radha, Spirit and nature."

By kriya [pranayama practice], the outgoing life force is not wasted and abused by the senses, but constrained to reunite with subtler spinal energies. By such reinforcement of life force, the meditator's body and brain cells are electrified with spiritual elixir [a substance with transmutative properties].

Sitting [passively] in the silence is an unscientific way of trying to separate the mind and the senses which are joined together by life force. Kriya pranayama, controlling the mind by controlling life force, is the easiest, most effective, and most scientific approach to the Infinite.

– Paramahansa Yogananda

Creation is governed by laws. The ones which manifest in the outer universe are called natural laws. There are subtler laws which can be known only by practice of yoga [unification of awareness with the one field of consciousness]. The hidden spiritual realms also have their lawful principles of operation. *– Sri Yukteswar*

Remember that you belong to no one, and no one belongs to you. Reflect that some day you will have to leave this world, so make the acquaintance of God now. Because of delusion [erroneous thinking] you perceive yourself as a physical body. Meditate unceasingly to realize your true, divine nature. *– Lahiri Mahasaya*

Few people know that the realm of God includes all mundane fulfillments. The divine realm extends to the material plane, but the latter, being illusory, cannot include the essence of Reality. *– Mahavatar Babaji*

When awareness is clarified, the reality of the true Self is revealed. *– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:47*

Attend Programs Online

In order to support the safety of our members and staff, the CSA Retreat Center in Lakemont, Georgia will be closed for the rest of 2020 and early 2021.

We will continue to offer the quality ministry services that Mr. Davis dedicated his life to by conducting online classes. You can now participate in CSA programs from anywhere in the world. All times are Eastern time zone.

Retreats: You can participate using Zoom.

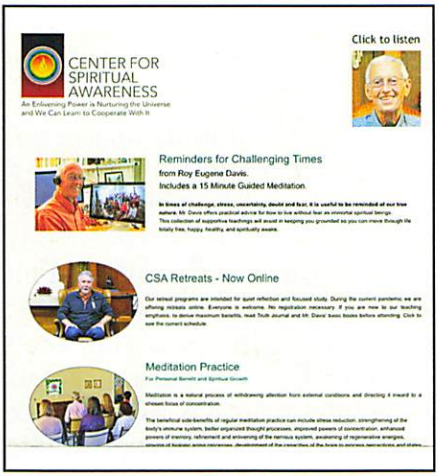
Visit: www.csaretreat.org
Code: 980 663 1368
Password: 957607

•**Sunday meditation:** 11 am

•**2021 Winter Weekends: csa-davis.org, *Main Menu, Retreats*, for Details and Schedules**

January 16 and 17
February 13 and 14
March 6 and 7

See Calendar on our Website for a complete listing of programs.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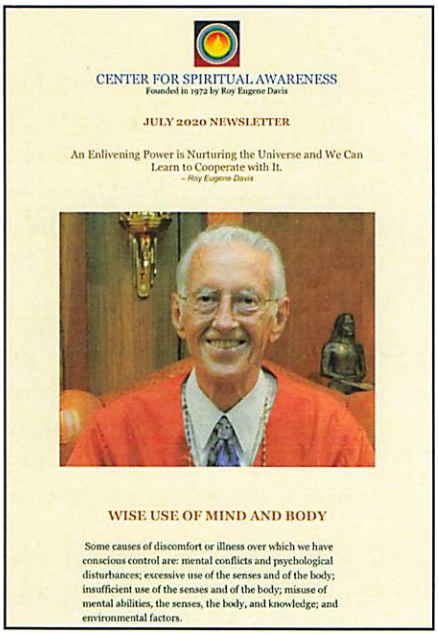
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JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

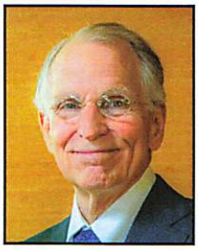
An Enlivening Power is Nurturing the Universe and We Can Learn to Cooperate with It.
– *Roy Eugene Davis*

WISE USE OF MIND AND BODY

Some causes of discomfort or illness over which we have conscious control are: mental conflicts and psychological disturbances; excessive use of the senses and of the body; insufficient use of the senses and of the body; misuse of mental abilities, the senses, the body, and knowledge; and environmental factors.

Webinar: Use the link in the CSA email newsletter.

The first Sunday of each month at 2 pm, a webinar with minister Ron Lindahn based on Roy Eugene Davis' book, *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. **www.csa-davis.org**



Ron Lindahn

Radiance

Published Quarterly for Kriya Yoga Initiates
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Spring 2021

Roy Eugene Davis enjoying a leisure moment during a lecture visit to New York City. *April, 2001. Photo by Jeannette Wulff*

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How to Remain Steadfast on the Spiritual Path

steadfast Old English *stede*, place + *fast*, fixed. Constant, unchanging.

From the depths of your being ask, "Why am I in this world?" If you intuitively "listen," you will know the answer. You are here to learn, grow to emotional and spiritual maturity, and awaken to complete Self- and God-realization and liberation of consciousness. While you are doing this, you should render useful, selfless service in accord with your capacity to do so.

Useful service is that which is of value to others, nature, and the trend of evolution. It should be performed *selflessly*, without need or expectation of recognition or reward. If the service you render is the work for which you are paid money, the material compensation, though necessary, is of secondary importance. Do not expect God to reward you for the good works that you perform. To do so would foster the illusion (mistaken perception) that you are separate from God. The truth is, God is individualized and expressing as you. Belief that you are "other than" or separated from God is a major obstacle to Self-knowledge.

The benefits that you will surely experience as results of selfless performance of useful duties will be:

- Purification of the ego: your sense of I-ness or individuality. When the ego is purified, your sense of individuality will not contract or confine your awareness.
- Clarification and enlargement of awareness.
- Insight into your relationship with the Infinite.
- More obvious support of the forces of nature and awareness of being a part of the wholeness of life.
- Freedom because of having transcended the ordinary human conscious condition.

While it is, of course, permissible to satisfy natural urges

and experience mental, emotional, and (sometimes) physical gratification because of having wholesome desires fulfilled, avoid thinking and behaving as if you were "only human." The human role that you are playing is temporary; sooner or later it will end. When it does, what will be your state of consciousness and your circumstances? Will you have accomplished the ultimate purpose for having been born into this world? I pray that you will.

Decide what is important and necessary. Decide how much time and energy you are going to devote to self-care routines to maintain your health and well-being, metaphysical study, meditation, family and social interactions, and work (service). Be disciplined. Allow some time for pleasure and recreation, but avoid circumstances and relationships that may distract you from your goals or cause you to waste your resources. Live with conscious intention; direct your attention and actions first to matters of importance. My guru often said, "By focused endeavor you can concentrate (bring together, attract toward a common center) your experiences and thereby quicken your spiritual evolution." It can be helpful to write a list of your priorities and either eliminate (or at least minimize) projects and activities which are not essential or are of little value.

Remember the four primary aims of life to be fulfilled: to find your right place in life (where you can most efficiently and effectively function) and adhere to it; to have your life-enhancing desires easily satisfied; to have sufficient material resources for your comfort, and to be successful in your endeavors; to be Self-realized and liberated. Don't think that you will have more time and be better able to concentrate on spiritual practices after you have satisfied your material needs or have retired from work. Cultivate spiritual awareness while doing other necessary things.

Lead me from the unreal to the Real.
Lead me from darkness [ignorance] to light [knowledge].
Lead me from [belief in] death to [awareness of] immortality.
– *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

priority Latin *prior*, first. 1. Precedence, especially established by order of importance or urgency. 2. Something that merits or is worthy of immediate attention.

Write a list of projects and activities which are of real value to you. Devote most of your energies and resources to them.

Write a list of projects and activities which are of minor importance. Either eliminate or consider them to be of secondary importance.

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Send questions or inquiries for possible use in a future issue by mail or e-mail ron@csa-davis.org

Is Self-inquiry a form of meditation?

To become aware of what you really are is the primary purpose of meditation practice. After you use a technique to calm the mind, and awareness is more clear, contemplate the essence of your being as pure consciousness. At first, this may be an intellectual process as you gently endeavor to discern the difference between what you are and ordinary, modified states of awareness. Then it becomes intuitive—which results in direct knowing and experience (realization). Self-inquiry can also be practiced at times other than when formally meditating. For this, sit still with eyes open or closed, pondering, "What is my real nature?" Sooner or later, there will be a spontaneous shift of viewpoint, from examining what you are to knowing what you are. There is no need to tell anyone that you know what you are; live in accord with that realization.

How does a guru or spiritually aware person "empower" a place? How is a person enlivened by such a place?

A spiritually aware person may manifest refined frequencies of energy in an environment by his or her presence, meditating or praying, performing a meaningful ritual, or chanting mantras. When a receptive person is in that environment, mental calmness and an enlivening of their soul forces occurs. Even a person who is not receptive and who may not feel anything different or special, is benefited at a subtle level. The environment where you live, work, and meditate can be "spiritualized" by your idealistic thoughts and clear states of awareness. If you have a special place set aside only for meditation practice, when you go there the supportive energies (and your memories of past enjoyable meditation experiences) can help you to immediately bring forth a superconscious state.

When I practice kriya pranayama, my throat gets sore, I experience a ringing sound in my ears, and feel light-headed. What can I do to avoid these reactions?

You may be practicing too aggressively. Do it slow and easy. Lubricate your throat with a small quantity of olive oil before practicing. (Put it on the back of the tongue and let it run down into the throat, to moisten it). Try to practice with your mouth closed, breathing through your nose but still with the "suction" effect in the throat. Slow (at a rate that is comfortable) and easy practice should solve your problems.

Remember that a meditation technique is like any other tool we use for a specific purpose. Learn to use it, use it skillfully for the intended purpose, then discard it when it is no longer necessary. Avoid overconcern about insignificant details: comparing how different teachers teach a meditation technique or whether using it one way is better than another. When you learn a helpful meditation technique from a knowledgeable person, use it until your practice is proficient, then go beyond it. When meditating, fervent aspiration and devotion are as important as practice of a useful technique.

Although I do not like to identify myself with a religion, I know that many people prefer to do so. Can a person practice Kriya Yoga without being a member of a religious group?

The basic Kriya Yoga practices (moral, self-disciplined living; study to know the reality of one's true Self and God; and purification of the ego) are common to many spiritual paths. One need not affiliate with an organized religious body to adhere to these guidelines. If one chooses to be a member of an organized religious body, Kriya Yoga practices will provide a firm foundation and contribute to more rapid spiritual growth.

The following definitions are from *Webster's Dictionary*:

religion 1.a. Belief in and reverence for a supernatural power as the creator and governor of the universe. b. A specific unified system of expression of this belief. 2. The spiritual or emotional attitude of one who recognizes

the existence of a supernatural power. 3. An objective or ideal pursued with fervor or conscientious devotion.

Religious beliefs and practices need not be orthodox (conformed to a traditional belief system). What is true should be acknowledged and accepted; what is not true can and should be ignored. Any external religious rituals that one chooses to perform, if they are helpful, can be maintained. Meditative contemplation is internal.

When I meditate and sense that I might experience a transcendent state of awareness, I become fearful and withdraw.

This is a commonly reported experience. It may occur because one is reluctant to experience a different state of awareness, fear of the unknown, or because it begins suddenly without prior indication. Confront the possibility of perceiving more accurately and having your awareness clarified. Observe the process.

I do not know anyone who shares my interest in spiritual matters, yet I desire to have friends and supportive personal relationships.

Choose your friends and enjoy wholesome relationships without being "needy" or desperate. Even with companions who are "on the spiritual path" it is not necessary to talk about metaphysical ideas. In fact, too much talk of this kind tends to make one superficial rather than deep or profound. Be friendly and kind, yet Self-reliant. You are always *in* God. Even with personal relationships, your relationship with the Infinite is private.

Although I have been studying and meditating for several years, I do not seem to be making any spiritual progress. Should I continue as I have been doing, change what I am doing, or ... ?

Review your meditation routine and make changes that seem to be useful. Meditate with alert attention, aspiring to peace of mind and clarity of awareness. Improve your intellectual powers. Discern the difference between what you are as a spiritual being and random thoughts and feelings that occur and fade away. Live in accord with your highest understanding. How will you think

and feel and what will you do when you are more spiritually aware? Cultivate those thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

What was Paramahansa Yogananda's attitude in regard to money and other material things?

He did not have strong attachments or aversions. He saw "things" as they are: as aspects of nature to be appropriately related to and used. He advised: "Banish the idea that there is a separation between what is spiritual and what is material." The power of Consciousness (Om) manifests the Primordial Field of nature (space, time, and cosmic forces) from which the universe is emanated. The physical universe is as "spiritual" as any other realm. Three attributes (gunas) pervade all realms. Although tamas guna (heaviness, inertia) is more influential in the physical world, we do not have to allow our thoughts and feelings to be overly influenced by it. In the Bhagavad Gita and the Yoga-Sutras "the forces of nature" are said to be the last influences to be overcome or transcended. This does not mean that we have to avoid contact with material things. The key to freedom is to "be in the world but not of it," to appropriately relate to the world while maintaining Self- and God-awareness.

During his early years with Sri Yukteswar, when my guru expressed his desire to be a reclusive yogi without having to be involved in organizational activities, Sri Yukteswar said to him: "That is a selfish attitude; do you want all of the divine food for yourself? Where would you be today if the lineage of large-hearted gurus had not provided you the opportunity to know God? Much work remains for you to do in the world."

Paramahansaji worked tirelessly for thirty-two years to establish the teachings of yoga in the West and train disciples who were receptive. His was not an easy mission to fulfill. Of the many thousands of people who were attracted to him, only a few really "heard" his message and fewer still practiced what they were taught. He was not discouraged. He said, "I was planting [spiritual] seeds in the soil of their subconscious which will [when the time is right for them] grow roots and sprout. He was a great visionary, often saying: "I am sowing the seeds for the future of

this work in the ethers." Many of his projects came into manifestation during his physical lifetime and many are still emerging.

In 1951 my guru told me of his wish for a temple to eventually be built on the site overlooking the SRF Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades, California. He told me that he had asked James Lynn, a wealthy, spiritually advanced disciple, to purchase it for the organization (which Mr. Lynn did). The temple, dedicated in 1996, now serves thousands of devotees. When I lived at the SRF Center in Phoenix, Arizona, in the early 1950s, he told me that a large, flourishing work would eventually unfold in that city. What he imagined and wished for is now actual.

To accomplish his purposes, my guru used all available means to reach out to and serve truth seekers. He said, "It is not wrong to use business methods (advertising in magazines and newspapers and other effective means of communication) for spiritual purposes." Devoting most of his time and energy to serving others, he reserved a few hours each early morning to meditate and do his inner work on behalf of disciples. (His "inner work" consisted of mental and spiritual attunement with disciples and visualization and prayer for global harmony and enlightenment.)

During the three years before his passing, he chose to live in a modest house near Twentynine Palms, California, about two hours driving time from Los Angeles. There, he wrote his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, met with a few disciples, and continued to direct organizational activities.

What happens to the souls of pets (domesticated animals) when they die of natural causes or are put to sleep?

What happens to all souls when they leave the physical body? They continue to live in the subtle astral realm. Souls that animate animal bodies may return in another animal form or may return in a form that is more evolved in accord with their need and their ability to express. Every day, millions of souls (units of the one field of Consciousness) die to the physical world and millions are born into it. There is no need to grieve nor to be overly concerned about the processes of life. Enjoy the company of your friends, relatives, and animals while allowing them to experience

the fulfillment of their own purposes in time and space.

When I meditate, I do not see the light of the spiritual eye. Is seeing it a matter of importance?

Although perception of inner light can aid concentration, it is more important to experience mental calmness and refined superconscious states. When thoughts are weak or subtle, you may then spontaneously become aware of inner light. If you do, observe it while going more deeply into the silence. More important than what is seen or felt is clear awareness of what you are and your relationship to the wholeness of life.

I have known individuals who could easily see the light of the spiritual eye (or claimed to do so) and reported having pleasant meditative moods who were emotionally unbalanced or intellectually deficient. This is not to say that their subjective perceptions (if real) were not of some value to them.

In some of your books you describe the stages of spiritual unfoldment. How can one awaken to the higher levels more quickly and easily?

By stages I mean degrees of clarity of awareness. To more easily experience a clear (less modified) state of awareness, aspire to experience it. Assume the corresponding outlook, thoughts, and feelings, and act as you would act if you were already established in the state of awareness you consider to be ideal.

My inquiry is in regard to methods used to fulfill desires or achieve goals. Prayer, visualization, and constructive actions (when I know what they should be and perform them) occasionally produce exceptional results. At other times, results are incomplete or nonexistent. Are there other influences involved: personal karma, planetary influences, or God's will?

Your states of consciousness determine your mental states, feelings, actions, reactions, and how omnipresent Cosmic Mind, the forces of nature, and others respond to you.

Personal karma: Memories and subconscious conditionings (samskaras) accumulated through the years because of your

thoughts, moods, desires, and the opinions of others that you have accepted as being true, although they may be false. Even if you are not aware of them, they may influence your thinking, emotional states, and behaviors. Resist, weaken, and neutralize them by constructive thinking and behaviors and superconscious meditation practice.

What is commonly referred to as "God's will" is really the innate urge of infinite Consciousness to express and fulfill evolutionary impulses and inclinations. When what you think and do enhances your life (and the lives of others who may also be involved or influenced) and clarifies and expands your awareness, then know that you are on your right course in life and in harmonious accord with "God's will" for you.

Did you endeavor to seek out or have another guru after Yogananda left this world in 1952?

No. My spiritual connection with my guru was established long before my present incarnation. I intuitively knew this when I first read his book *Autobiography of a Yogi* (in 1949) and he confirmed it several times during private conversations at his Twentynine Palms retreat house when I went to visit with him (1950-51). Although through the years I have met a few highly aware people, and have enjoyed pleasant friendships, my spiritual path and teaching mission have always been anchored in this Kriya Yoga tradition. While respecting all authentic enlightenment traditions (as we should), never have I deviated from our basic teachings and practices, nor have I ever been inclined to do so.

I don't think that I was fully prepared to make a commitment to this path when I was initiated into Kriya Yoga meditation practices. I now feel more certain about my readiness. Should I be initiated again?

If you think that you are ready to be firmly resolved, you can make that choice now. Also, when possible, participate in another kriya initiation service to review your practices and renew your commitment. It is my experience that doing this is beneficial. I was first initiated by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1950 and again

Paramahansa Yogananda – *(circa late 1940s)*

attended an initiation service with a group of devotees in 1951. The more intimately we are involved with this path, the more clearly we comprehend its value and the deeper we are drawn into attunement with the gurus and the spiritual support that is available to us.

Remember that the Kriya Yoga path includes more than the practice of meditation techniques. Complete practice includes self-disciplined living; profound study to acquire more knowledge of ourselves, God, and our relationship to life; and purification of our illusional sense of selfhood (ego). Doing these things enables us to meditate more effectively, and meditation supports right living and intellectual and intuitive inquiry into the meaning of life and its processes. Meditating to the stage of superconsciousness purifies the ego.

To support your resolve on this path, read the Yoga-Sutras frequently. Lahiri Mahasaya advised his disciples to read a few verses from this source and the Bhagavad Gita every day. A good time to do this is after meditation practice when your mind is calm and you are more receptive to what is read.

Comment in more detail about the value of devotion.

Devotion (spiritual ardor) keeps our attention focused on God and inspires and empowers us to do our utmost to fulfill the desire of our heart (being), which is to be God-realized.

We should have insight into what God is. Although God is infinite Consciousness, if a personalized form or aspect of God is imagined, devotion to this concept can be beneficial. As our awareness is clarified, our perception of God becomes more accurate. When we are God-realized, we know and experience the reality of God as God is.

Balance devotion with intellectual inquiry, meditation, and practical, effective living. Avoid emotionalism and fantasy. Be firmly resolved on the spiritual path, yet patient. Once, when I was concerned about my seeming lack of spiritual progress (I wanted to be enlightened immediately) my guru told me to continue to aspire while cultivating patience. In some yoga texts the word *patience* is used as a synonym for inner (Self, not personality-

based) contentment in all circumstances—one of the basic qualities to be cultivated by a devotee.

I'm frustrated. As I look at the world, it seems to be purposeless. For billions of years, people and creatures have been born and died. Civilizations rise and fall. Much of what is of interest to most of my friends (who seem to be happy) is not important to me. I am asking myself, "What is the reason for it all?" "If nothing in this world is permanent, if everything is fated to eventually change or disappear, why should I endeavor to accomplish anything?"

The world will continue to exist whether you play a role in it or not—and you will continue to have a relationship with it until you awaken to the level of realization where you have no desire or need for it. Why not view the processes of life as a cosmic drama in which you can choose to cheerfully play a supporting role or sit on the sidelines? Since you cannot withdraw from participation, you might as well adapt by living effectively without mental or emotional attachments to what you do. Improve your knowledge and skills. Think in terms of being in the flow of life's rhythms. Think and act in ways which will be of real benefit to others and the planet. Instead of thinking about what you want to get from life, think about what you can do to give of yourself to life, then act decisively. Many people in ordinary awareness are superficially happy because they are not very conscious and are easily satisfied. The happiness of saints is authentic because, established in Self and God-knowledge, they have no illusions.

Focus your attention within. You will experience
new power, new strength, and new peace in body,
mind, and spirit. When you do this, all bonds
that limi you will vanish.
– Paramahansa Yogananda

Attend Programs Online 2021

We are continuing to offer the quality ministry services that Mr. Davis dedicated his life to by conducting online classes. You can participate in CSA programs from anywhere in the world. All times are Eastern time zone.

2021 Spring Saturday Seminars:
Go to csa-davis.org, *Main Menu, Retreats*, for Details and Schedules. Also the Calendar on our Website for a complete listing of programs.

April 10 – Ayurveda for Optimum Health and Well-Being based on *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda*
May 15 – Silence based on *In the Sanctuary of Silence*
June 12 – Creative Imagination based on *How to Use Your Creative Imagination*
July 17 – Develop a Personal Relationship with God based on *Satisfying Our Innate Desire to Know God*

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You can participate in all online classes using Zoom.
Visit: www.csaretreat.org
Code: 980 663 1368
Password: 957607

Note: If you don't have a smart phone or computer, you can call with your telephone:
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Then enter Meeting ID:
980-663-1368 and press #.
When it prompts you for the participant ID, press # again.

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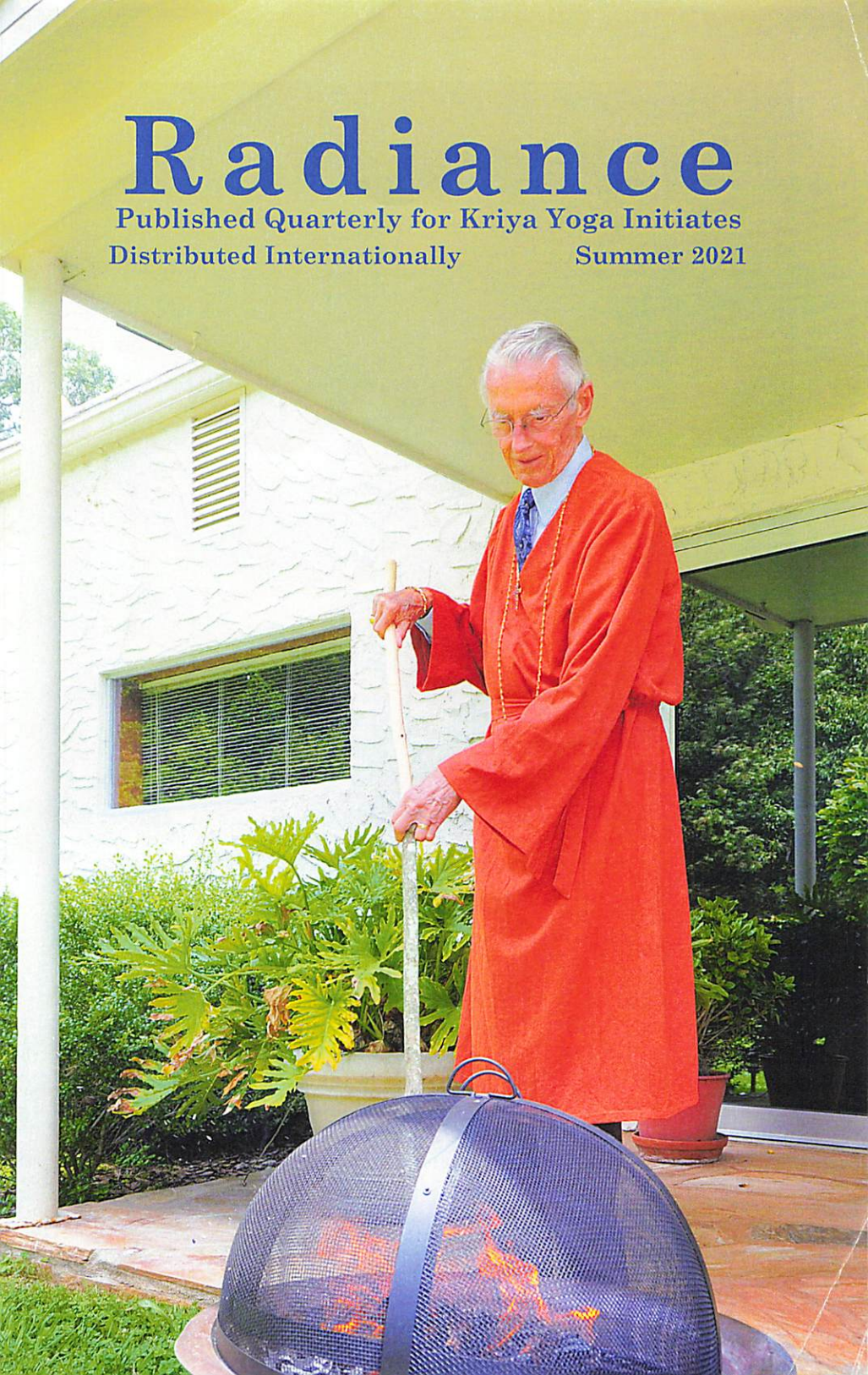

Roy Eugene Davis during the CSA Holy Season meditation retreat at CSA Headquarters. *December 2008*

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Kathleen Low, Editor
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Are You Using the Knowledge You Have?

You have access to knowledge of philosophical principles and lifestyle guidelines which can enable you to live with inspired purpose, and have been initiated into a spiritual tradition with roots in the field of pure consciousness.

If knowledge is not skillfully used, it is powerless to confer benefits. What are you doing with it? In the sanctuary of your inner being, ponder your response to the following questions:

Do you always think, feel, make choices, and act in accord with what you know to be highest and best for you?

Very few people do, unless they are fully enlightened. Do the best you can as conscious spiritual exercise. With practice, your thinking will always be rational and optimistic, you will be happy and enthusiastic, your choices will be appropriate, and your skillful, constructive actions will produce positive results. Soul-centered rather than personality-centered, know that you are anchored in the Infinite.

Are you always alert and attentive rather than lethargic or inattentive?

Controlled attention is the master-key to effective living and to skillful meditation practice. The third and fourth verses in the first chapter of Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras* explain that the Self-aware soul abides in its true nature; when not thus Self-aware, attention tends to be attracted to and identified with mental states (as well as emotions and other objects within range of the senses). Avoid allowing uncontrolled emotions, restlessness, fantasies, or mental dullness to dominate your awareness. Train yourself to be soul-centered regardless of what you are doing, experiencing, or observing.

Are you always aware of your true nature in relationship to the Infinite?

As often as necessary, remind yourself of what you are in relationship to the Infinite. You are an immortal spiritual being playing a role in space-time. Whether you always know it or not, you abide in the one field of consciousness (God). Until you are permanently Self- and God-realized, improve your knowing. An intellectual grasp of the truth of what you are in relationship to the Infinite is helpful; direct, intuitive apprehension is better; actual realization is superior. Strive to intellectually comprehend, intuitively know, and realize the truth of the essence of your being and of consciousness and its processes. Patiently persist.

Do you faithfully adhere to an appropriate self-care regimen?

Review your self-care routines in regard to the food you eat, exercise program, schedule for activity and rest, and whatever else you do for physical and mental health and well-being. Review the Lifestyle Guidelines in lesson two, part two (starting on page 39) of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. Know your basic mind-body constitution and adapt your exercise program and other activities accordingly.

Do you read the recommended literature?

Recommended reading for kriya initiates: Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras* (in *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, *The Science of Self-Realization,* and the new online version of *Life Surrendered in God*); and *The Eternal Way: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita*.

A good time to read a few lines of text is immediately after meditating when your mind is more receptive and awareness is more clear. Don't despair if you do not fully grasp all that you read. As your intellectual and intuitive powers improve and inner knowledge unfolds, you will eventually understand everything and have your own insights.

Do you meditate daily?

Practice the basic meditation techniques (kriya pranayama and the supplemental routines) at least once a day to refresh your nervous system, calm the mind, and have an opportunity to perfect superconscious states. A short session can be done in a few minutes. Sit longer (30 minutes or more) when you can do so. Daily meditation will clarify your awareness. It also reinforces your commitment to the spiritual path and helps to keep you focused on important matters.

Are you an active, supporting member of CSA?

A few kriya initiates request that only *Radiance* magazine be sent to them. They say that they don't have time to read too many publications or are reluctant to become involved with an organization. Make time to read helpful information. Be an active, supporting member of CSA which is only organized for the purpose of providing helpful information and assisting truth seekers to unfold and actualize their innate potential.

Shortly after Paramahansa Yogananda met Sri Yukteswar, he admitted his aversion to organized endeavors. His guru said to him: "Where would you be today if others had not made this knowledge available to you?"

Do you care enough about the spiritual welfare of others?

Care enough to do more than wish for their highest good or pray for their spiritual fulfillment. Share your good wishes and your God-realized prayers, and do more: assist me in the service of others. Tell receptive individuals about our work. Distribute our literature. Above all, be a good example so others can readily see (and intuitively perceive) the value of the kriya yoga path.

The seer, while observing what is seen, remains pure. Universes exist to provide souls a field in which to express.

– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 2:20,21

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Spiritual progress: How much depends on our own endeavors and how much on God's grace?

Our own endeavors are necessary to make us receptive to the actions of grace. Our innate urge to be fully conscious may be thwarted by mental confusion, psychological conflict, or an unrefined nervous system. The mind should be calm, thinking should be rational, psychological conflicts should be resolved, and the nervous system refined by a healthy lifestyle and regular, superconscious meditation practice. Kriya pranayama practice, moving currents of life force through the spine and brain, rapidly refines the nervous system.

When we have done our utmost to purify the mind, refine the nervous system, and clarify our awareness, unrestricted, elevating and illuminating (sattvic) impulses from within us (referred to as grace) can more easily unveil and bring forth our innate knowledge and qualities.

Kriya yoga practice—disciplined thinking and behavior, study and analysis of metaphysical principles, and surrender to God (withdrawing awareness from the illusional sense of selfhood)—removes all mental and physical obstacles to Self-realization (reference: *Yoga-Sutras 2:1,2*).

When I meditate, it is difficult to concentrate. When I am not meditating, my mind is restless and my attention wanders.

Anticipate (eagerly look forward to) meditation practice so that when you sit, you will be alert and attentive. Remember the purpose of practice, which is to calm the mind and clarify your awareness. When you are interested, concentration will be natural. Withdraw your attention from, and disregard, all other concerns.

At other times, remain relaxed and calm. Be attentive only to that which is important. Avoid idle talk (conversation which

is nonessential or purposeless) and useless social interaction. By cultivating inward calm when engaged in normal activities you will always be more Self-aware and meditation practice will be more proficient and satisfying.

Although I practice meditation on a regular schedule and do my best to live a good life, my spiritual progress seems slow. What can I do?

Keep doing what you are doing. Beneficial improvements are occurring at deeper levels. Sooner or later you will notice that you are more aware and more insightful.

How are you evaluating your spiritual progress? Some of the indications of spiritual progress are inner contentment, mental calmness and emotional stability, increased awareness of being a part of a larger field of reality, and ability to more easily comprehend philosophical concepts.

I have long been attracted to a saint who left his body in India fifty years ago and endeavor to attune myself to his mind and consciousness when I meditate. Is this a useful practice?

The person to whom you refer was (and is) considered to have been an illumined soul. He taught others that, while it could be helpful to have a disembodied enlightened being as a focus for meditation to improve concentration, one should not think that blessings or guidance flow from an imagined object of devotion. Many people have had uplifting experiences by doing as you have been doing—not because a "saint" or guru responded, but because of their own faith or a temporary superconscious state elicited by their expectations.

While several objects or ideals are suitable for meditation, Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras 1:39* advises "choosing one object that is pleasing or agreeable." Regardless of the object chosen, it will (or should) eventually be transcended.

Some teachers say that once a guru-disciple relationship is established, it persists until the disciple is liberated, even if the process requires many lifetimes. Comment on this.

A real guru-disciple relationship is an intimate soul to soul connection. The guru commits to assisting the disciple to full liberation of consciousness; the disciple commits to right living and dedicated spiritual practice. A disciple should aspire to be liberated in one lifetime. If liberation is not accomplished in one lifetime, the spiritual bond remains.

If an established personal relationship between a guru and disciple cannot be maintained because they are not embodied (in the physical or an astral sphere) at the same time, transmission of grace through the lineage of gurus continues. If personal communication is not always possible, the disciple may learn, when necessary, from another teacher or some other reliable source (preferably the guru's written words or those of other enlightened teachers). When a disciple learns from other sources, attunement with their own guru and the guru lineage should be maintained and nurtured.

On rare occasions, a disciple may request to discontinue the relationship. When this occurs and consent is given, the guru, although always radiating good will, is not obligated to provide guidance or assistance.

When I was initiated, nothing special or unusual was felt. Was my initiation authentic and beneficial?

If the one who is initiated is sincere, the instruction and the transmission of spiritual force is beneficial. The occasion is "a new beginning," not the end, of a quest for Self-knowledge. The initiate should then wholeheartedly adopt a lifestyle and spiritual study and practice regimen that will enable him or her to more easily experience rapid spiritual growth.

From time to time I have thought that I would like to lead a meditation group or even be a teacher in the kriya yoga tradition. How can I know whether I am really meant to do this?

You can lead a meditation group now. If you know two or three friends who are interested in meeting once a week or every now and then, do it. Just come together and sit to meditate for an hour. If someone needs instruction, explain the simple process as

outlined in the first lesson of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* or have them listen to my meditation CD: *Two 30 Minute Guided Meditation Practice Sessions*, available from CSA. Avoid nonessential discussion.

To be a teacher, adhere to your spiritual practice routines, continue to study, and attend our online seminars and retreats to improve your understanding of the basic teaching emphasis of this tradition and become more attuned to it. Remember that enlightened consciousness is the real teacher. Our duty is to accurately and selflessly represent the kriya yoga tradition and provide information and encouragement.

Can a person "take on" another person's karma to help them?

Although it is possible, it is rarely done. The better way to help others is to educate them to help themselves and to pray for their well-being and spiritual growth.

To pray (or do inner work) for others, first meditate until you are calm and Self- and God-aware. Then think of those who need help and share your awareness of wholeness with them. Physical proximity is not necessary; we (and they) abide in the ocean of infinite Life. By assisting others to experience their true nature and the wholeness of Life, they will be able to "see through" their limitations or problems and experience beneficial changes in accord with their higher understanding.

When someone asks me what the prerequisites for kriya initiation are, what should I tell them?

Preparation is important. Recommend that they first read about the kriya yoga tradition to acquire a little understanding of it and learn and practice the basic meditation procedures. The ideal characteristics for one who wants to be initiated are:

- Sincerity.
- A capacity to learn.
- Absence of mental perversity (an inclination to distort information for self-centered purposes).
- Respect for the teacher and the teachings.

- Willingness to learn.
- Commitment to practice.

In Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras it is mentioned that one on the spiritual path is eventually removed from the influences of cosmic forces. What does this mean?

With the emergence of Self-knowing, all karmic conditions cease to be influential.

Then, because of the superior knowledge which has removed the residues of karma from the mind, very little remains to be known.

Because of that, the influences of the attributes of nature, having accomplished their purposes, cease to be influential.

– Yoga-Sutras 4:30–32

The dawning of the knowledge that accompanies Self- and God-realization occurs spontaneously when our awareness is no longer blurred and fragmented. Conditions which formerly obscured our perception of the truth fade away. Realization of our true nature in relationship to the Infinite is then stable.

The final "overcoming" occurs when our enlightenment is complete and permanent, and forces in nature governed by the three constituent attributes (gunas) cannot disturb our Self- and God-realization. Before that, the gunas "serve their purposes" by regulating the governing principles (vata, pitta, and kapha influences) that pervade our mind and body.

When meditating, if tamas guna is influential, a feeling of dullness may be present. The influence of rajas guna may cause superconscious meditative states (samadhi) to be mixed with various perceptions: thoughts and feelings, visions, or ecstasy. The influence of sattva guna may result in a sense of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. When these influences are absent, pure existence-being is realized.

Can it be helpful for kriya yoga practitioners to have their horoscope analyzed by a vedic astrologer?

Sri Yukteswar, who had highly developed intellectual and

intuitive powers, examined the horoscopes of his disciples to more fully determine their psychological characteristics and tendencies. Although he sometimes advised a person to wear a bracelet or bangle made of certain metals (and sometimes gems), and recommended dietary and other regimens (based on his knowledge of Ayurveda) and attitude and behavioral modifications, his primary emphasis was that of Self-knowledge and God-realization. He said (as all wise yogis do) that a person should use every available means to avoid suffering and misfortune and to cultivate spiritual growth.

If you want to have your horoscope analyzed, contact a competent vedic astrologer who is spiritually aware and use your common sense when evaluating what you are told. Avoid thinking that you are wholly dependent on cosmic (or any other external) influences. The more spiritually aware you are, the less you will be influenced by external conditions (including subconscious or karmic states which are external to you as a spiritual being).

What is meant by lower and higher knowledge?

Lower knowledge is of the mundane realm and is essential to have if we are to live here effectively. Higher knowledge is of matters which are not confined to this realm: the primary causes which produced the universe, the categories of cosmic manifestation, the truth about souls, the reality of God, and how to awaken through the stages of spiritual growth.

I was initiated a few years ago and am still having difficulty with the practice of kriya pranayama and the other procedures.

Keep your practice simple. When doing kriya pranayama, pull the current up through the spine, into the higher brain and spiritual eye with inhalation; let it flow down when you exhale. Feel it moving up and down. Also practice the "path of God" technique (sushumna breathing) described in some of my books including *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. Read about kriya pranayama practice in my books to become more familiar with the process. Now and then, during the day when you are not

meditating, feel your spine and spiritual eye. Be more inwardly aware and soul-centered. Think about and be aware of your relationship to the Infinite. As your understanding improves, so will your practice. Gently persist until you are satisfied that you are practicing correctly. Sit in the deep silence after doing the pranayamas. If you need more instruction, request a DVD from our office. It is free to our members who are initiates. If you are not a CSA member, send $5.00 plus $2.00 postage.

Thinking about abstract philosophical concepts is difficult. I have a devotional temperament. Chanting God's name makes me feel good.

Balance your devotional practices with reading about and contemplating the inner meaning of philosophical concepts. After chanting, go beyond "feeling good" to a superconscious state. Devotion can keep you focused on the spiritual path. Study of higher realities will enable you to effectively relate to the world and unfold your innate knowledge. Be devotional and knowledgeable. The path of devotion alone may result in emotionalism. Balanced, satisfying spiritual growth can occur more easily when the most useful aspects of all of the yogic paths are integrated.

Paramahansa Yogananda was strongly devotional when he met Sri Yukteswar. He said that his first few months with his guru were not easy because of Sri Yukteswar's plainspoken manner and emphasis on rational thinking and attention to details. Paramahansaji said that he needed that experience in order to develop a more balanced personality.

Nowhere in the world is there anything that purifies that is equal to God-knowledge. The devotee who is perfected in yoga [samadhi], in the course of time discovers that knowledge in the Self. – *The Bhagavad Gita 4:38*

By deep meditation and right living, calm the waves of thoughts and desires that cause ordinary perceptions of reality. Then superconscious, you will behold everything as it really is.
– *Paramahansa Yogananda to Roy Eugene Davis*

Sri Yukteswar's Comments on the Bhagavad Gita

Sri Yukteswar wrote articles on yoga and vedic astrology and two books (*The Holy Science* and a *Bhagavad Gita* commentary which is not readily available). After being initiated by Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar met with truth seekers and explained the inner meaning of the Gita. He also visited Lahiri Mahasaya for instruction in regard to some verses.

Meditators offer all actions of their senses and of their vital forces into the fire of yoga of self-control which is kindled by knowledge. ***– 4:27***

[Skillful] meditators awaken [innate] knowledge by self-restraint, concentration, and meditation. The subtle organs of perception and action are dissolved and restlessness ceases.

Note: Kriya yoga meditation is practiced by quieting the mind and senses, then concentrating on a chosen object or ideal.

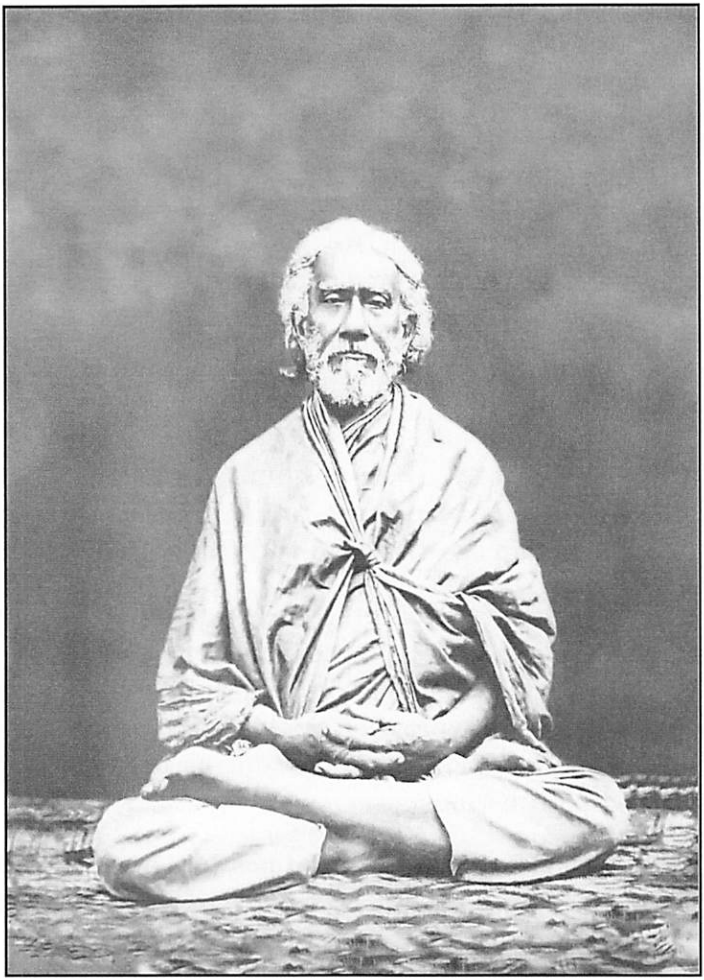
The subtle organs of perception and action which make possible perception of, and expression in, the objective realm are "dissolved" (awareness transcends them) during profound samadhi (meditative superconsciousness).

Some [devotees] offer their material possessions or austerities or spiritual practices; ascetic devotees offer their study and learning. ***– 4:28***

Determined devotees enhance their physical health by natural means and disciplined living. They then restrain [and pacify] the wavelike movements of thoughts and mood shifts in their mind and awareness and regulate the actions of prana [life force] by pranayama practice.

Others offer apana into prana and prana into apana [to neutralize these flows of life force]. ***– 4:29***

[Kriya] yogis mix prana [ascending life force in the spine] with



Swami Sri Yukteswar *(1855 – 1936)*

apana [down flowing life force]. Yoga texts describe this practice as *kevali pranayam*a, the natural way to still the breath. During the restrained state, restlessness ceases, the mind is calmed, and [Self] knowledge is revealed. The eternal happiness of the Self is firmly established.

Fluctuations in the field of individualized awareness can also be subdued by regulating eating and other behaviors.

Note: Kevali (absolute retention), stabilization of breathing (and awareness) may occur after kriya pranayama practice. Breathlessness is not the aim; the purpose of practice is to clarify awareness. Slow, nonforceful breathing contributes to mental calmness and (when sitting still) mental calmness is accompanied by slow, nonforceful breathing.

Some meditators endeavor to elicit superconscious states before the body and mind are calm. If physical relaxation and mental peace are accomplished first, it is easier to experience superconsciousness.

The best way to overcome restlessness is to practice kriya pranayama, then sit in the deep silence that follows.

Few people [who erroneously think they are mortal beings] know that the wholeness and perfection of God extends fully to this earth plane. – *Mahavatar Babaji*

When the devotee sustains concentration on the ultimate Self, that [pure consciousness] is realized. When established in that, oneness is realized. There is no doubt about it.
– *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Attend Programs Online 2021

We are continuing to offer the quality ministry services that Mr. Davis dedicated his life to by conducting online classes. You can participate in CSA programs from anywhere in the world. All times are Eastern time zone.

2021 Summer and Fall Saturday Seminars:
For a complete listing of programs, go to csa-davis.org, the Calendar on the home page, or the Center for Spiritual Awareness Facebook Page

June 12 – Creative Imagination based on *How to Use Your Creative Imagination.* The June-July issue of *Truth Journal* magazine features helpful articles on this subject.

July 17 – Develop a Personal Relationship with God based on *Satisfying Our Innate Desire to Know God.* An excerpt of this book is also featured in the June-July issue of *Truth Journal.*

Topics to follow for these dates:

August 14 September 11 October 16 November 13

Sunday meditation: 11 a.m. throughout the year

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Note: If you don't have a smart phone or computer, you can call with your telephone:
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When it prompts you for the participant ID, press # again.

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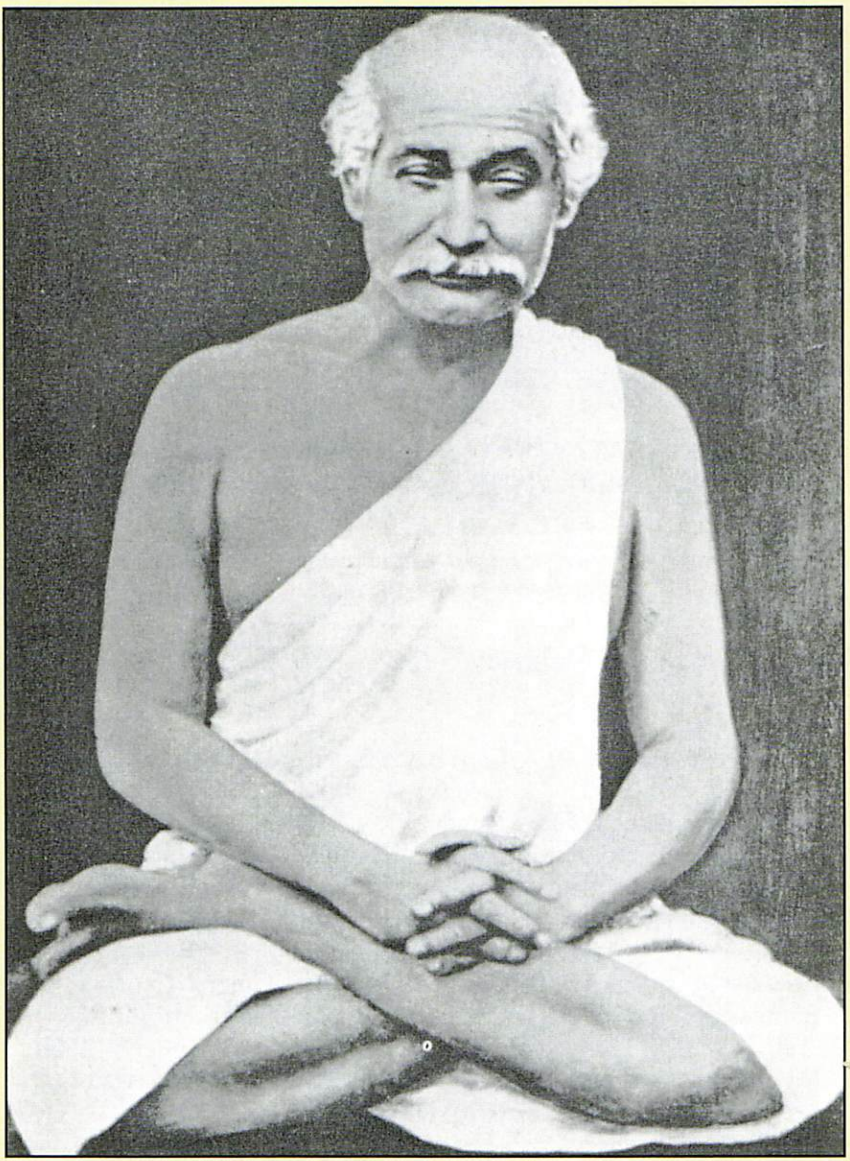

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Front cover: Lahiri Mahasaya *(1828 – 1895)*

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Awaken From All Delusions

Delusion An untrue or mistaken belief.

A primary obstacle to effective living and spiritual growth is the accumulation of false beliefs that are allowed to prevail in the mind. Whether privately maintained or widely believed and disseminated, they are delusions that cloud and confine awareness and interfere with rational thinking.

Minor delusions that may or may not cause problems are:

- Our personality characteristics and prevailing circumstances are entirely due to environmental and social influences.
  The truth: Our personality characteristics and the circumstances that prevail result from our mental states, states of awareness, and behaviors.
- As we grow older, mental and physical disability is inevitable.
  The truth: Healthy, effectively functional, long life is possible.
- Intelligence cannot be improved.
  The truth: Powers of intellectual discernment can be developed.
- Any other commonly accepted false opinion in regard to human nature and everyday circumstances that many people believe to be true because "everyone knows" it to be so.

Major delusions that definitely cause problems:

- We are human beings with a soul.
  The truth: We are spiritual beings incarnated in a physical body.
- Karma (subconscious tendencies) cannot be overcome.
  The truth: The subconscious mind can be purified and illumined, and ideal near and distant future events and experiences can be actualized by wise choices, effective actions, and God's grace.
- We cannot be spiritually enlightened in one human lifetime.
  The truth: At the core of our being we are already enlightened; we have only to awaken to this fact.
- Evil forces are resisting the forces of good.
  The truth: Only one power of Consciousness exists and we can

learn to be aware of and cooperate with it.
- Any other false belief that obscures our perception of what is true and contributes to irrational thinking, flawed perceptions, and dysfunctional or Self-limiting behaviors.

False notions may be unconsciously acquired because of inaccurate or incomplete understanding of the meanings of words, ideas, events, or circumstances; intellectual laziness; lack of curiosity; or naive acceptance of erroneous ideas and opinions expressed by unenlightened people.

- Improve your intellectual and intuitive powers.
- Be intent on knowing what is true.
- Be enthusiastically curious.
- Instead of finding fault with others whose ideas are erroneous, disregard their opinions.

If some of your false ideas were acquired at an early age before your powers of reason were developed, renounce them when you become aware of them. You will immediately be more clear-minded, feel lighter, and have more energy.

Believe what is true. Don't tenaciously cling to false ideas because they comfort the mind, elicit pleasant emotions, or enable you to maintain harmonious friendships with others who are neither knowledgeable nor interested in acquiring higher understanding.

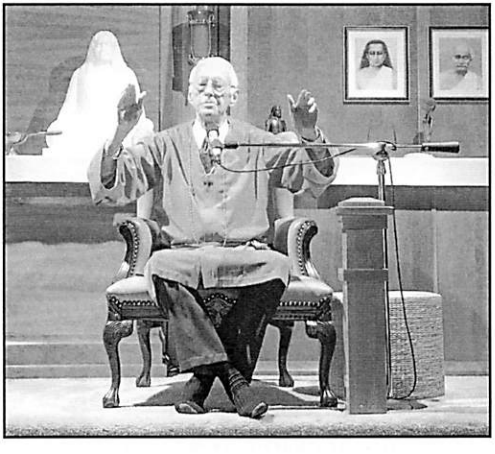
Socialization, compliant adaptation to behaviors and ideas of people whose awareness is ordinary or conditioned, is the most common way in which false ideas are transmitted from one person to another. This occurs among individuals whose interests are only worldly as well as those who are on a spiritual path.

What can be done for others whose ideas are false? If they are receptive to learning, inform them of the truth. If they are not receptive, allow them freedom to make their own choices.

Now and then a person tells me of their experiences. They frequently "talk" with Mary the mother of Jesus or with other disembodied beings; a psychic said that the purpose of their present incarnation is to learn patience—in the next incarnation they

will do many worthwhile things; a fictional metaphysical teaching (which they believe to be authentic) is "very meaningful" to them. Because they are not yet able to discern the difference between fantasy and reality, or their inclination to indulge in illusions is more compelling than their desire to know the truth, there is nothing I can say or do to clarify their thinking.

Have the courage and the will to quickly awaken from the dream of mortality. Acknowledge, assume, and actualize all of the attributes, qualities, and powers of your divine nature.



One Supreme Self is the ultimate reality—the source of everything. The Self [of everyone] is immortal. God's attributes permeate it. Let your spiritual path be God-communion.

When the waves of mind are transcended by meditation practice, consciousness is purified and oneness with the Supreme Self is realized. The phenomenal world, the truth seeker's awareness, and Supreme Consciousness are experienced as one.

The mind has two states: restless and serene. When the mind is serene, the reality of God is reflected in it. God, all-pervading and eternal, transcends mind and intellect.

Meditation results in revelation. Out of the reality of one's being arises the perception and realization of the pure Self. Self-realization is conscious cognition of absolute identity with God, the Self-revelation of our true nature by the illumination of pure consciousness. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

When meditating, I sometimes feel God's presence as a great peace or joy. What determines this? Do astrological (or other) influences cause me to feel it?

Peace, joy, love, compassion, fullness, and enlargement and clarity of awareness may accompany a sense of the presence of God or infinite Consciousness. At such times we may feel and "know" that we are in relationship to a larger reality. Although external conditions may be somewhat influential, awareness of the presence of God can be nurtured. One way to do it is to remember previous episodes of God-awareness and elicit (bring) them forth.

When I see light it is not always centered at the spiritual eye. Sometimes the light (or lights) are off to the side. Should I concentrate on what I see where it is or try to bring it into the spiritual eye?

Practice steady inward gazing. Be aware at the spiritual eye and let the light manifest. Sometimes you may actually look at it; it will just be there. To improve your ability to gaze steadily, you can first do it by calmly looking at something (such as a candle flame) for a few minutes without allowing your attention to be distracted.

When I was practicing a form of mindfulness meditation, though it was not dynamic, my concentration was more one-pointed. When I practice the kriya techniques I experience heightened superconscious states and strong energy flows along with accelerated thoughts and "mind trips." Should I reduce my kriya meditation practice and return to the basic concentration routines or will restless mental activity eventually fade with continued kriya practice?

Practice a routine of kriya meditation techniques to enliven your nervous system and move prana upward, then sit in the tranquil silence until your mind and awareness are clear.

Some teachers recommend staying with one technique for the duration of a meditation session. My practice naturally seems to carry

me from one technique to another and often into a place beyond technique. Should I "go with the flow" or exercise more control?

Use a meditation technique until it is no longer needed. If kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra are sufficient to produce a state of inward calmness, there is no need to do anything else. During long meditation sessions, supplemental techniques can be used to refresh your practice and keep your attention flowing to pure consciousness. When you first sit to meditate, have a definite procedure and immediately begin to practice. At all times, remain alert and attentive.

I used to experience pleasant superconscious meditations. Now, when I meditate, my mind is flooded with random thoughts. I am confused and feel insecure.

Meditate daily to experience inner peace. At other times, make your life worthwhile by having a clear sense of purpose and actively fulfilling that purpose. Refuse to allow moods to dominate your mind and awareness. Think rationally. Accept the fact that you abide in the wholeness of God now and live as the spiritual being you are. When possible, associate with others who are optimistic and forward-looking. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Be happy. Although these may seem like simplistic ideas, you have the power, ability, and freedom to choose your mental states, states of awareness, and behaviors.

Over the past few years I have listened to taped recordings of Paramahansa Yogananda's voice and many of the phrases emerge into my mind from time to time. Recently I remembered the words, "I am the living link of the masters—follow that ...," I have been attuning myself to the gurus and certainly notice the difference. How can my attunement be enhanced?

Improve your mental and spiritual attunement by being thankful for their guidance. Think about them and, when possible, read or listen to their words. Cultivate a loving, respectful attitude. Remember: what they represent (rather than their personality characteristics) is the most important thing. Attunement should

be considered as a point-of-contact with infinite Consciousness. It is the wish of every enlightened teacher that their disciples will quickly awaken to complete Self- and God-realization.

While nurturing attunement, endeavor to live in accord with what they teach. Avoid mental perversity: inclinations to distort the teachings for self-serving purposes. Also, avoid fantasy.

Many teachers, including Paramahansa Yogananda and you, spent many long hours meditating. Yet, you often recommend shorter, alert sessions with occasional longer ones. Does this mean that many of us are not advanced enough to meditate for long sessions? Are we supposed to focus more on controlling the mind, emotions, and behavior and "living the life," or is just staying centered and aware of God's presence enough? Aren't long, deep meditations necessary to explore the full extent of consciousness?

Short (twenty to thirty minute) sessions are advised for beginning meditators and for those who are not able to remain alert and attentive for an extended duration of time. If you can productively sit for an hour or more, do so. Now and then, sit for two or three hours. Depth of experience is more important than long hours of sitting. When not meditating, be aware of your relationship to the Infinite and do your best to live wisely and appropriately.

Why are there so few women gurus?

There are many spiritually enlightened women who serve as teachers (gurus). Gender is not an issue: the capacity to be an agent through which higher knowledge and spiritual force can be transmitted qualifies a person to be a guru.

I find it difficult to keep my gaze steady at the spiritual eye. How can I focus there more effectively?

Put your attention and feeling there. Doing this not only aids concentration; it encourages the development of the front lobes of the brain which are related to will power, creativity, decision-making, optimism, and the ability to control states of awareness and personal behavior.

As a mother of three, I would like to help my children and teach them about Kriya Yoga practices. Are there any references or books that you know about that might help me do this?

The best way to help children is to be a good role model. They will then learn by your example how to think and act. Provide them with how-to-live knowledge and a supportive environment, then allow them the freedom to fulfill their own destiny. For your well-being, while performing necessary duties, adhere to your self-care and spiritual practice regimens.

I fully understand the matter of rendering selfless service without a need for recognition, but I don't understand doing this without receiving monetary compensation. How is one to continue to work if one is not paid?

There are many ways to render service. Consider all of the constructive thoughts you have and the actions you perform as service to others, society, and the planet. As an employee, or if you have your own business or profession, money will of course have to be received to enable you to live comfortably and do other things you consider to be of value.

Now, after graduation from college, I am looking forward. I have many ideas about what I would like to do and have been told by a vedic astrologer that I could be successful in a healing profession. This appeals to me. What should I do?

What do you think is best for you to do? Choose a course of action that will support your highest aspirations and be supportive of others and the planet. Decide, then act skillfully with enthusiasm. Life will provide a variety of opportunities for your continued learning, personal growth, and service.

In regard to the siddhis described in the third chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras: Should these be intentionally cultivated?

Siddhis are exceptional abilities and powers of perception that are natural when we are spiritually awake. In the yoga-sutras, emphasis is placed on using siddhis to accomplish liberation of

consciousness. If used unwisely for self-centered purposes, we may create more difficulties for ourselves. Our innate abilities and powers should be cultivated, then used for entirely constructive purposes. Powers of concentration can be used to live effectively as well as to perfect superconscious states. The ability to know what we want to know enables us to discern the truth of what we observe in the mundane realm and to discern the truth of what we are in relationship to God. The ability to accomplish what we desire can be used to achieve meaningful goals and to quickly be Self- and God-realized. If we are wisdom-directed rather than ego-driven, there will be no problems.

One of the most useful abilities we have, and which should be cultivated, is imagination. Imagine possibilities for your highest good in all aspects of your life and for experiencing rapid spiritual growth. What you can clearly "see" and believe possible that is for your highest good (and for the highest good of others), can be experienced.

Exceptional abilities and powers of perception are natural when all limitations are renounced or transcended.

Did Paramahansa Yogananda recommend practicing hatha yoga?

He recommended hatha yoga, but did not emphasize it in his lectures or writings. At some public functions, he would ask two or three disciples to demonstrate a few of the asanas.

Hatha yoga practice is life-enhancing and can be helpful as preparation for superconscious meditation. After the basic procedures have been learned, it is best to practice alone, in a meditative mood. Yoga practice is "spoiled" when engaged in as a social event or is commercialized.

I enjoy discussing metaphysical ideas with others. Is this useful?

If brief discussion is beneficial for you or for others, it can be useful. If engaged in as an excuse to talk or motivated by loneliness, it is not spiritually useful; it would be better to do something more productive. If the life you are living is meaningful, there will be no need to talk too much about metaphysical matters. It is better to live an ideal life than to talk too much about it.

Paramahansa Yogananda *1893 – 1952*

From time to time I hear (or read) that Babaji has appeared to someone in a vision, has communicated by mental telepathy and instructed that person to teach, or has recently appointed new representatives for the 21st century. What am I to think about such stories?

Don't think about them; they are false. Paramahansaji said that after he was gone, many such claims would be made—and that they should not be believed. There is no need for Babaji to appoint new "representatives"—the lineage of gurus (teachers) through whom this work is transmitted is already established. Paramahansaji did say that Babaji sometimes works with other individuals and group endeavors to fulfill his mission—quietly and privately, in ways which do not conflict with the transmission of Kriya Yoga through the line of gurus.

I have heard of people who travel to India hoping to contact Mahavatar Babaji, to no avail. What are your thoughts about this?

For the average person, endeavors to meet with Babaji are certain to fail. If one is not established in superconsciousness, there is no possibility of comprehending Babaji's state of God-realization. There is a reason why he remains in seclusion; he works on the inner planes and does not want to be bothered by spiritually immature devotees. Lahiri Mahasaya advised his disciples to attune themselves to Babaji's consciousness by meditating and merging their awareness in the spiritual eye. There is no need to travel to a distant land in an endeavor to obtain information about the spiritual path which is already available in books or from teachers of this tradition who are accessible.

Is it helpful for a gathering of devotees to pray for the welfare of others and for world peace and harmony?

Members of such well-intentioned group endeavors probably derive more benefit than the intended recipients. Research projects, during which individuals were prayed for, revealed that subjects who did not know of prayers being made on their behalf

sometimes experienced marginal improvements in personal circumstances and more rapid healing than did individuals who were not prayed for. Praying for others will not hurt them, and may help. Prayers of spiritually aware people are most helpful.

The most effective way to pray is to first be established in Self- and God-awareness, then include others in that consciousness of the wholeness of God. While we can pray for specific outcomes (if we know what is best for others), it is usually better to pray for their highest good, knowing and believing it, and let the most appropriate results occur.

Paramahansa Yogananda prayed for planetary enlightenment and for others every day, as do I. It is recommended that you also do this.

I am not as committed to Kriya Yoga practice as I would like to be. For several days, or even for a few weeks, I am focused, then I allow myself to be distracted or lazy.

Complete kriya practice includes all that you do from the moment you wake up in the morning to when you go to sleep at night. Monitor your thoughts, moods, and actions. Endeavor to think rationally and constructively. Be cheerful and optimistic. Perform actions skillfully. Read every day from some inspired source, especially the Bhagavad Gita and the *Yoga-Sutras*. Meditate regularly. Be soul-centered, not self-(personality) centered. While engaged in activities and allowing your emotions to be wholesomely expressive, avoid unregulated emotionalism and compulsive behaviors. Cultivate mental and emotional peace to keep subliminal impulses controlled and pacified so that they cannot become influential. You will then be the master of your attention and states of awareness: a real kriya yogi. Memorize and comprehend the significance of the second sutra in part one of Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*: *yoga chitta vritti nirodha*: yoga (wholeness) is experienced when the *vrittis* (fluctuations) in *chitta* (the individualized field of awareness) are *nirodha* (controlled and restored to their nonactive state). When restless mental and emotional conditions cease, the kriya yogi's awareness is clarified. Self- and God-knowledge is then possible.

Guidelines to Discipleship

– Roy Eugene Davis

Remember that you belong to no one, and no one belongs to you. Reflect that some day you will have to leave this world, so make the acquaintance of God now. It is only because of delusion that you perceive yourself as a physical body. Meditate unceasingly to realize your real, divine nature. *– Lahiri Mahasaya*

disciple Latin *discipulus*, a student; from *discere*, to learn.

kriya To do, to make happen. Kriyas are constructive actions performed to accomplish purposes; also, spontaneous, transformative actions which occur when soul forces are enlivened.

yoga To yoke or unify. Conscious unification of soul awareness with the one field of Consciousness (God). The seeming separation of a soul and God is an illusion, an error of perception easily corrected by improving one's powers of intellectual discernment and by right meditation practice.

When you were initiated, you learned unique meditation methods and were encouraged to commit fully to the life-path of discipleship. Regular, alert, skillful practice of the meditation techniques and routines can enable you to consciously realize your true nature and your relationship to the Infinite. Equally important as meditation practice is dedicated discipleship. A disciple on a spiritual path self-responsibly adheres to lifestyle regimens and practices advocated by a philosophical system or enlightenment tradition.

Some essentials of discipleship are:

- *Humility.* Characteristics of humility are respectful attitudes and behaviors in regard to others and to civil laws decreed for the common good and the laws of nature, deferential acknowledgment of what is true, willingness to learn, and absence of arrogance (an exaggerated sense of self-importance). Arrogance is a symptom of egotism: attachment to one's illusional sense of selfhood.
- *Continuous learning.* For the duration of your involvement with the ever-changing realm of nature, there will always be something new to discover. Until your Self- and God-realization is

flawless, you will need to persist in right endeavors and be both receptive and responsive to the impulses of God's grace.

- *Experimentation in adapting newly acquired knowledge and new states of awareness to ordinary circumstances to be able to live effectively*. Skillful living is a beneficial spiritual practice that will enable you to understand how the universe functions and to appropriately relate to and interact with it. You will then more easily experience the fulfillment of meaningful purposes—of aims and goals which have real value. Endeavors to accomplish *meaningless* purposes confine and distort awareness, create attachments to useless relationships, dissipate energies, increase problem-causing mental impressions (samskaras, subconscious conditionings), and restrict the unfoldment of soul qualities. The primary purpose of dedicated Kriya Yoga practice is to remove all mental and physical restrictions, thus allowing soul awareness to be restored to wholeness.
- *Willingness to grow to full emotional and spiritual maturity*, demonstrated by rational thinking and self-responsible personal behaviors and constructive actions.
- *Unwavering resolve to awaken to liberation of consciousness*: permanent soul freedom beyond which there is nothing more to be accomplished.

It is only by living in accord with and being aware of the effects of the laws of life (the principles and processes that determine the relationships that occur between or among observable events) that they can be fully comprehended. It is for this reason that Kriya Yoga initiates must clearly understand that all of the recommended lifestyle regimens are important.

Mystic Reflections

Only that person who lives the [right] life will understand these teachings. –*Saying attributed to the Buddha*

Let your personality be egoless and let appropriate actions proceed from you. The infinite consciousness alone is the truth; it is that which has put on this appearance of diversity, which is neither real nor unreal. Live unattached to anything here. –*Vasista's Yoga*

With the dawning of knowledge that accompanies Self- and God-realization, all obstructions and restrictions cease to be influential. With the dissolution of obstructions and restrictions, the Self reclaims omnipresence.
–Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 4:30,31

That devotee whose understanding is unattached, who has self-mastery and from whom all desires are gone, awakens to the supreme state. –*The Bhagavad Gita 18:49*

When, by means of inference, the true nature of the universe and the relationship between it and the essence of being is understood, and when it is understood that delusion alone causes souls to forget their true Self and to experience suffering, one naturally wishes to be relieved from all misfortune. Thus, liberation from the bondage of delusion becomes the primary aim of life.
–Swami Sri Yukteswar

Radiance

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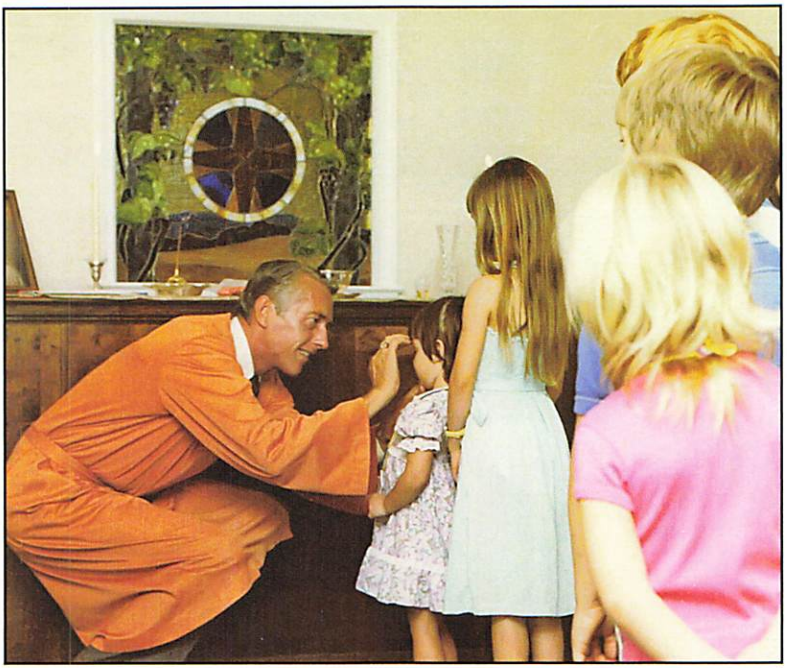

Roy Eugene Davis blessing children in the Shrine of All Faiths Meditation Temple during a July Family Week retreat.
Late 1980s.

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Kathleen Low, Editor
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Kriya Yoga Practice Supported by Knowledge Is Effective

*Samadhi without complete knowledge may be temporary. From this state, one may progress to higher realizations or become involved again with the gross realm and the actions of nature.

– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:19

* **samadhi** From the verb-root *sam*, to put together. A state of clear, unfragmented awareness.

Samadhi "brings together" our awareness with the field of supreme Consciousness. Although we are always one with supreme Consciousness even when we do not know it, we can directly experience it during episodes of samadhi.

Preliminary samadhi states may be experiences of bliss or a sense of oneness (or communion), yet knowledge of our true nature and the reality of God may not be complete. If we are intent on discovering the reality of God we may progress to more clarified states of samadhi during which knowledge is apprehended. If we are not alert, we may again identify with mundane phenomena and the influences of nature's forces. This is why yoga (samadhi) is practiced until it is perfected.

Remember that samadhi is not a passive or semiconscious state of entrancement or fascination with subtle perceptions which may be had. It is conscious, alert awareness of either being "one with" that which was contemplated (or comes forth spontaneously) or realization of a transcendent state which is beyond identification with meditative perceptions (bliss, joy, light, the Om vibration, or other perceptions).

The knowledge that is acquired by superconscious means should be examined and verified. This can be done by rational analysis, intuition, and comparison of samadhi insights with the teachings of Self-realized people.

On December 25, 1949, during my first conversation with my guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, he told me to read only his books

and recommended scriptures for one year. He wanted me to read only essential information, practice meditation, and cultivate awareness of God. Later, on another occasion, he said, "When your powers of discernment are well-developed, you can read anything without becoming confused." As time passed, I discovered that his advice was of great value. Not only did I become more Self- and God-aware, I was able to easily discriminate between truth and untruth.

Read the Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*, *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*, *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, and other basic books until you grasp the philosophical concepts that are described, acquire insight into the processes of cosmic manifestation (and expression), know how to live effectively, and can meditate skillfully. You will then be able to more easily know what is occurring during superconscious states and what is perceived and experienced will be more readily understood.

Knowledge that is acquired as a result of reading, thinking, and meditative superconscious episodes should enable you to be inwardly peaceful in all circumstances while you are living more effectively. Remember Paramahansa Yogananda's words in one of his correspondence lessons written during the 1920s: "Banish the idea that there is a separation between spiritual life and material life." Don't think that study of metaphysical concepts and meditation practice is for the purpose of enabling you to escape from or avoid mundane responsibilities.

Learn to live effectively; skillful living is yoga practice that can be engaged in at all times. When performing your duties, nurturing relationships, achieving worthwhile goals—be soul-centered and God-aware. Weaken and dissolve ego-sense (the illusional sense of selfhood) by viewing yourself as an agent of divine purposes—a participant in the drama of life. You will then become increasingly aware of your relationship with the Infinite. You will not only experience superconscious samadhi states when meditating, you will eventually always be Self- and God-realized, no matter what you are doing.

Frequent meditative superconscious states purify mind and clarify awareness. Interruptions of concentration are few or absent

when attention is internalized. With practice, you will be able to maintain your clarity of awareness after meditation practice: first for a short time, then always. The Self- and God-aware state is the permanent state to be realized. When you are established in it, although there may be some subconscious conditionings yet to be weakened and removed, more knowledge to acquire, or more skills to learn, from that stage onward your spiritual growth will be more rapid. You will know what cannot be learned from books or even the words of a wise person. Knowledge will be both unfolded from within you and directly discerned by observation.

The one Consciousness has knowledge of itself. You, as an individualized unit of the one Consciousness have knowledge of Consciousness (God) and its processes within you. When you read words of truth and they are "real" to you, you are being reminded of what is so. You could not recognize the truth if you did not already have it within you. Unrecognized facts are only concepts which, even though true, are not apprehended as being true.

In the first chapter of Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*, it is said that one means of acquiring valid (reliable) knowledge is to learn from someone who is already knowledgeable or enlightened. Reading accurate descriptions of philosophical concepts and about how spiritual growth can be made easier is a practical way to acquire knowledge that is useful.

The more knowledgeable you are, the easier and faster your spiritual progress will be.

I agree that yoga [samadhi] is not easy to accomplish by one whose self-conscious nature is uncontrolled; but by the devotee whose self-conscious nature is subjected to the Self's will, by right endeavor and proper means it is possible to accomplish.
– Bhagavad Gita 6:36

One [supreme] Self is the ultimate Reality. Let your spiritual path be God-communion. *– Lahiri Mahasaya*

How to Improve Your Kriya Meditation Routines

Austerity; study; and surrender to God are the means by which perfect concentration [and inner peace] can be accomplished. This is the path of kriya yoga. It is practiced to remove all physical and mental obstacles to God-realization.

– Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 2:1,2

Austerity is disciplined, intentional living: skillful doing of what needs to be done while disregarding what is not useful. (Review the yamas and niyamas in the second chapter of the *Yoga-Sutras* and grade yourself on your performance.)

Study includes intellectual inquiry into and calm analysis of our true nature and the one field of Consciousness (God).

Surrender to God is surrender *in* God by first discerning the difference between the habit-maintained illusional sense of self-hood and our pure-conscious essence of being; then by letting go of the subtle sense of being separate from God.

Note that attentive kriya yoga practice removes obstacles to God-realization. When physical and mental conditions that restrict our innate urge to be Self-realized are absent, Self- and God-realization occurs spontaneously. In our urgency to experience rapid spiritual growth, we may overlook the fact that our right endeavor is for the purpose of ridding ourselves of all that prevents it. We may wonder why we cannot more easily understand metaphysical principles, why it seems that we have so many difficulties and troubles, or why God does not more obviously assist us. The truth is, we already have the basic information we need and the means by which we can help ourselves—if we are motivated to do so.

Many initiates presume themselves to be practicing kriya yoga because they are using the meditation techniques they learned when initiated. They are forgetful (or unaware) of the need for disciplined, intentional living; study that results in insight; and ego-purification. If these actions (kriyas) are not performed (or at least attempted), one's meditation practice is unlikely to be skillful or to produce satisfactory results.

When you sit to meditate, remember why you are doing it. The purpose of kriya meditation practice is to calm the mind so that superconscious states will be experienced. The ultimate aim is to abide in samadhi (clear superconsciousness). If you are primarily inclined to want to have fascinating subjective perceptions or ecstatic sensations, you are meditating for the wrong reason. Interesting or enjoyable meditative perceptions and sensations may be experienced; if they occur, observe—then transcend—them. What is seen or felt is not what you are or what pure consciousness is.

Start by acknowledging the one field of existence-being and the fact that you are an individualized unit of it. Doing this can immediately remove the mistaken idea that you are but a limited human creature attempting to be Self-realized.

Acknowledge the lineage of gurus, thankful that through them you have been given the gift of knowledge of the kriya yoga path.

Begin meditation with devotion—with fervent aspiration to have your awareness clarified and restored to wholeness. If you already have a keen understanding of your true nature and your relationship with the Infinite, aspire to awaken more fully to the wholeness of life. You will then avoid the mistake of trying to "become" enlightened. You will know that, at the core of your being, you are already enlightened. When the mind is calm and your awareness is clear, the light (reality along with knowledge) of the essence of your being will shine of its own accord.

Practice kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra as prescribed, and rest in the deep silence after using each technique. If you also use one or more of the supplemental techniques, also sit in the deep silence after doing them.

Remain alert and attentive. Keep your awareness focused at the spiritual eye (the very front region of the brain related to concentration and discernment). You may also be aware in the higher brain (and perhaps just above it).

When your mind is calm and your attention is internalized, meditation will flow spontaneously and smoothly while you

observe and experience what occurs.

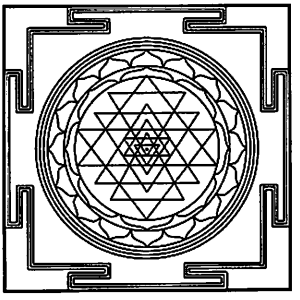
When doing kriya pranayama, inhale a little more deeply than usual, pulling the current up through the spine from the base chakra into the front region of the brain; let the current flow down through the brain and spine as you exhale. If you are a new kriya pranayama practitioner, do 6 or 7 repetitions a minute until you acquire proficiency, then do them more slowly. Discover the speed that is comfortable for you, neither fast nor slow.

One initiate informed me that he felt he had better results by practicing kriya pranayama with short, quick inhalations and exhalations. It is all right to do two or three short, quick pranayamas for the purpose of awakening the life force in the lower chakras before starting the regular routine. Then, bringing the current upward and letting it flow down should be regulated as explained in the preceding paragraph.

When the mind is calm after using a meditation technique, contemplate to have more insight or to experience samadhi. Meditative contemplation is 1) concentration on an object to be comprehended or an ideal to be realized; 2) uninterrupted concentration (meditation); 3) insight into what one aspires to know or absorption of attention in the ideal to be experienced.

Sitting in the silence aspiring to apprehend and experience pure existence-being is a useful contemplative exercise. If you sit long enough, watching and waiting, without harboring any rigid ideas or notions about what is to be experienced, your innate intelligence, and grace, will determine the outcome.

Using the Sri Yantra for Meditative Contemplation



A yantra represents cosmic forces which manifest as and express in the universe. The prefix *sri* indicates auspiciousness (good fortune).

Yantras may be engraved on gold, silver, copper, or any metal; carved on stone; drawn on paper or an object; or painted in colors.

Sri Yantra is used by some accomplished yogis, especially by those whose powers of intelligence and intuition have been highly developed, to meditatively contemplate the processes of cosmic manifestation and absolute (pure) Consciousness from and by which the universe is emanated. To do this, the significance of the triangles, circles, and other symbols that comprise the yantra should first be understood.

Sanskrit mantras are considered to be sound frequencies of cosmic powers; yantras indicate the form-patterns of those powers—which, because of their influences, are sometimes referred to as "gods" or "goddesses" (deities). There is only one power of Consciousness; it expresses as various aspects to perform specific cosmic functions.

Sri Yantra has five triangles with their apex downward and four triangles with their apex upward. The five downward pointing triangles represent the descent of divine power (Shiva) and its creative force (shakti) into and as matter. Thus both masculine and feminine characteristics are portrayed. The four upward pointing triangles represent the ascent of divine power to its source. The square form contains and protects the cosmic forces.

The dot in the center of the design represents kundalini, the power of supreme Consciousness in a static (motionless) state with infinite potential to manifest. It is that state from which universes emerge and to which they return when they are dissolved. Cosmic kundalini enlivens and vitalizes living things;

our kundalini energies enliven and vitalize us. The one power of Consciousness expressing in the cosmos and our innate power is the same. As a result of right living, devotion to God and the ideal of God-realization, and practice of kriya meditation methods, our inherent power awakens and contributes to our spiritual growth.

A variety of meanings can be assigned to the various parts of the yantra. When seeing a triangle, one can be reminded of the three gunas, the constituent attributes of nature which are influential in the Godhead (Cosmic Soul or Oversoul), the field of Primordial Nature, all levels and aspects of objective cosmic manifestation, and the minds and bodies of humans and creatures. One can also be reminded of the three ordinary states of awareness: deep sleep (unconsciousness), the dream state, and the waking state—as well as the fourth state of unmodified, superconsciousness which transcends them.

The outermost circles may remind one of siddhis, various exceptional powers of perception and functional ability that may be acquired as a result of spiritual awakening—which are primarily to be used by yogis to nurture spiritual growth until complete liberation of consciousness is accomplished. The middle circle can remind the devotee of ritual gestures which may be used to support or indicate a sincere intention to enter into and have a meaningful relationship with the Infinite.

The sixteen outer lotus petals can signify cosmic powers related to desires associated with intellect, ego (the illusional sense of selfhood), sound, touch, form, taste, smell, fortitude or the ability to endure hardship, memory, name or presumed self-identity, our true essence, idea of soul, body, immortality, or whatever else may be thought about. The eight inner lotus petals can remind one of cosmic forces which operate through the mind and body.

When contemplating the wholeness of Consciousness, one may be reminded that it alone makes accomplishments possible. It is the source and substance of wealth; the doer of all that occurs; that which (when apprehended) removes suffering, sorrow, and obstacles; and the provider of good fortune. One can further be inspired to contemplate the fact that Consciousness is omniscient

and omnipresent, and supports the actions and processes of nature while, at the inmost level, is ever pure Existence-Being.

Seeing the downward pointed triangles one can ponder the categories and processes of cosmic manifestation:

- The power of Consciousness emanates from the Oversoul as a continuous vibration pervaded by the intelligence of Consciousness and the three gunas.
- The Om vibration manifests within itself primary cosmic forces, space, and time: the field of Primordial Nature which somewhat "covers" Consciousness and from which the fine essences of the universe are emanated.

  Units of pure Consciousness are individualized because of interactions between Consciousness and inertia inherent in the field of Primordial Nature. Pure Consciousness is referred to as the Supreme Self; a unit is the true Self of the individualized aspect. When the awareness of the individualized unit or Self becomes overly identified with primordial nature and its characteristics (usually because of the influence of inertia), its powers of perception become diminished, and delusions (erroneous notions) and illusions (mistakes in perception) result. The deluded unit is then referred to as a soul in need of being restored to its original, pure or unmodified state of awareness.
- Causal, astral, and physical realms emanated from the field of Primordial Nature are pervaded by cosmic forces which are regulated by the intelligence of Consciousness and the influences of interactions that constantly occur between the three gunas. The characteristics of the gunas are the power of attraction; the heaviness of inertia; and the transformative actions which occur because of these interactions.
- When analyzing the processes of cosmic manifestation, one may contemplate or visualize the five subtle essences of the senses of hearing, touch, sight, smell and taste which, when we are incarnated, enable us to perceive the varied aspects of objective phenomena. The five subtle essences of the organs of action which make possible speech, dexterity, mobility, reproduction, and elimination. And the five subtle essences of elements

(space with cosmic forces, air or gas*, fire or transformative influences, water, and "earth" which interact and combine to manifest gross matter. One may also be inclined to ponder why and how souls individualize and become involved with cosmic processes, and how awareness can be most easily and quickly restored to the original state of wholeness.

Observing the upward pointing triangles, one is reminded that everything that comes into manifestation will eventually return to the source. By internalized meditative contemplation on the reality of Consciousness and its processes of cosmic manifestation, the devotee can use powers of discriminative intelligence and intuition to apprehend its wholeness. By gradually or suddenly withdrawing attention from the objective realm, the senses, mental and emotional states, and the illusional (mistaken) idea of selfhood, absolute existence-being can be realized.

*The state of matter differentiated from solid and liquid states by very low density and viscosity, rather than great expansion and contraction with changes in pressure and temperature, the ability to diffuse readily, and the spontaneous tendency to become distributed uniformly in a given space.

– *Webster's New Riverside University Dictionary*; 1984.

Swami Sri Yukteswar and Paramahansa Yogananda reunite during Yogananda's visit to India. *1935–36*

Sometimes, while in a meditative state, questions will surface in my mind, such as how to solve a personal problem or how to achieve a goal. Insight will then provide me with the solution. Are these "revelations" from Cosmic Mind, or someone in this or another realm with whom I am in telepathic communication?

Answers to questions or solutions to problems do not come from outside of yourself. Creative ideas arise from within your mind. Your intellectual or intuitive powers provide insights. If you pray to God or a saint for guidance and you have a helpful response, it is because you are receptive to apprehending the knowledge that is always at the core of your being. To think that knowledge must come from an external source is to be dependent on that erroneous notion. It can also lead to irrational thinking and fantasy—which are to be avoided by a truth seeker.

I've heard it said that the seven major chakras are related to the seven colors of the light spectrum. Is this so?

There is no correlation. The colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet can be observed when sunlight passes through a glass prism. The colors of the energies of the chakras, which may be inwardly perceived, are produced by their vibrational frequencies. Some of the information about chakras (astral centers in the spine and brain) now published is not reliable. Among "new age" groups it is not uncommon for gemstones, music, colors of light, and laying on of hands to be recommended for awakening or balancing the energies of the chakras. Yogis should not be involved with such activities. They can practice asanas, mudras, and kriya pranayama, and chant Om or other mantras to enliven kundalini energies.

If God's wholeness extends fully to the earth realm, why the conflict in the world, and why is it so difficult for me to have a comfortable, satisfying life?

Conflicts exist because many people lack understanding and are greedy and selfish. The fact of God's wholeness is not easily comprehended, or actually perceived, by individuals whose awareness is ordinary (fragmented and blurred). Because you want to know your true nature and the one field of Consciousness, you can, by purifying your mind and clarifying your awareness, be a conscious knower of the truth that will liberate you from all difficulties and allow you to live peacefully and effectively.

I'm confused about my meditation practice. I have been doing the kriya meditation techniques for two years. Recently I was introduced to, and have been experimenting with, the mantra method taught by TM teachers. Should I use both: the kriya meditation techniques and the TM mantra that I learned?

Dedicated kriya yogis should not experiment with methods which, while perhaps useful for others, are not in accord with our kriya yoga tradition. The TM (Transcendental Meditation) mantra technique is a valid method for persons who have been initiated in that tradition. The process is the same as that practiced by meditators who use Om, hong-sau, so-hum, or any traditional mantra. The energy frequency infused into a TM mantra at the time of initiation is not the same as the energy frequency of our guru tradition. By mixing the techniques, there is a possibility of adulterating (weakening or making impure) the energy frequencies that flow through a lineage of enlightened teachers. The guru of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was an enlightened sage. He used Sri Yantra as a focus for meditative contemplation.

When meditating I occasionally experience a state of pure thought-free existence-being. Is this what it is like when a Self-realized person leaves the body? Do we cease to be aware of our individuality?

At the time of transition from the physical body, our state of consciousness is determined by the degree of clarity of our awareness. We may experience pure consciousness devoid of modifying influences or a superconscious state may be somewhat blurred by thoughts, emotions, or subliminal influences.

If pure consciousness is experienced, our sense of individual selfhood may cease—permanently if we are prepared for that, or temporarily if subconscious influences exist which may be activated or if we have a mission in space-time to complete.

My desire to be Self- and God-realized is so insistent that nothing else seems important. I am not happy in my present circumstances and can't claim any obvious spiritual progress. What can I do to know God?

Be one hundred percent dedicated to kriya yoga practice: 1) discipline your thoughts, emotions, and actions; 2) study to improve your understanding of the mundane laws of cause and effect and metaphysical (beyond the physical) principles; 3) develop powers of discernment until you can always know the difference between your Self and ordinary states of awareness; 4) practice kriya meditation methods; 5) learn to live effectively.

To derive utmost benefits from a relationship with a guru or spiritual teacher, what qualities should I nurture?

Humility, willingness to learn and apply what is learned, absence of mental perversity (a tendency to misinterpret or twist the teacher's words to satisfy self-centered purposes), and respect for the teaching tradition and the teacher. If your guru is enlightened, accept what you are told without having any reservations or doubts. In the early 1950s, when I was with Paramahansa Yogananda, he only spoke the truth and always encouraged me to live a good life and deeply meditate. When he corrected my mental attitude or behavior he said, "I only want you to be as [spiritually] strong as I am."

A guru's primary role is to assist the disciple (learner) to emotional maturity and Self- and God-realization. A disciple's responsibility is to take full advantage of the opportunity that a meaningful guru-disciple relationship provides.

The Wisdom of Saints

Several months after he became a disciple of Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda impulsively left the ashram to go to the Himalayas, where he hoped to meditate in solitude and attain Self-realization. After several troublesome travel episodes, he met a secluded disciple (Ram Gopal) of Lahiri Mahasaya who advised him to return to the ashram and meditate in his room. Shortly thereafter, he had his first experience of cosmic consciousness. – *Autobiography of a Yogi, chapter 14*

As a young man, Sri Yukteswar traveled widely in India to meet and talk with saints and sages. When he met Lahiri Mahasaya, he was immediately initiated into kriya yoga. After several years of practice, he was given permission to initiate others. Sri Yukteswar trained Paramahansa for his mission of teaching yoga in America.

Lahiri Mahasaya demonstrated by personal example that it is possible to accomplish Self- and God-realization while living in the midst of everyday circumstances. He advised most of his disciples not to renounce the world, but to fulfill their obligations to society and privately practice meditation on a regular schedule, as he did.

Babaji's mission in the current era (which will continue for several thousand years) is to remain in seclusion, work with a few spiritually advanced souls, and radiate divine influences into the collective consciousness of the planet. He has said, "Few people [whose awareness is ordinary] know that God's wholeness extends fully to this earth plane."

Radiance

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Roy Eugene Davis dedicating the newly built Shrine of All Faiths Meditation Temple. *July 1983*

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Kathleen Low, Editor
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Yoga Philosophy and Essential Practices

Yoga-darshana, commonly translated as "yoga philosophy," means more than speculative ideas. *Darshana* means "to see" or directly perceive the truth of what is observed. For the yogi engaged in disciplines and practices that will calm the mind and clarify awareness, what is to be perceived is the reality of the essence of being in contrast to conditioned states of awareness.

Exactly when in human history yogic procedures were first practiced is not known. Patanjali (circa 200 C.E.), in his yoga-sutras (chapter 1, verse 1), affirmed that his purpose was to present in concise form the essential principles and practices which had been known for centuries. Yogic methods are described in the Bhagavad-Gita, which was composed at least two thousand years before Patanjali lived.

To become proficient in the practice of yoga (as defined by Patanjali), a sincere practitioner's endeavors must go to the core or root source of life rather than be considered as ways to merely somewhat improve the human condition—which is the unenlightened motive of many people who now practice some forms of yoga. Regardless of the reasons that people may have for practicing yoga, their participation is of value to them and their acknowledgment of its usefulness serves to make the subject of yoga more widely known. Paramahansa Yogananda once said that yoga would eventually be taught in schools and colleges; this is now being done.

A yogi is advised to have implicit faith in the testimony of enlightened sages who have already experienced the results of their intentional practice. Spiritually knowledgeable yogis declare all things in the realm of nature to be insubstantial; having come into manifestation, in the course of time their present forms will cease to exist. Behind the veil of nature is a reality which is permanently unchanging, just as at the core of our being we are forever changeless. While living in the realm of nature, the yogi is not obsessively or blindly attached to any external thing

or relationship, not even to his or her thoughts or feelings, which are obviously constantly changing.

Even before Self-realization occurs, yogis should use their powers of intellectual discernment to perceive the difference between their essence of being and what they observe. They will then be aware of being other than a body which was born and other than a mind which processes information derived from perceptions. They should realize the futility of completely relying on external conditions for their well-being or permanent happiness.

Although the material universe is real because it is formed by the energy of Consciousness, if we are only capable of perceiving its external aspects, it appears to us to be illusory. Material substance is not independent of its source, nor does its existence depend on our perception of it.

Knowing the facts of life should not cause a truth seeker to be sad or apathetic (mentally lazy, emotionally depressed and disinterested in personal duties, worthwhile projects, or meaningful relationships). Yogis are advised to live effectively and support the trends of evolution without strong attachments to their constructive actions or to the results of such actions.

For the value of yoga practices to be comprehended, they must be diligently applied to allow personal experience that will verify them. Only that person knows yoga who practices yoga.

Yoga is conscious awareness of oneness, wholeness. In the first chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras, various means which may be used to realize oneness (samadhi) are described. Samadhi can occur spontaneously when the mind is calm and awareness is clear. It can also be realized by meditative contemplation on an object to which attention flows without interruption: light; sound (Om); the bliss (sheer joy) of Self-awareness; or an aspect of God to which one is devoted. The key to successful meditative contemplation is to identify with what is looked at with alert expectation of either merging with or comprehending it.

Alert, unwavering, concentrated attention on an object of contemplation is meditation. When sustained, it culminates in samadhi. Unwavering concentration is not possible when the mind is restless or emotions are unsettled. The mind and emo-

tions can be quieted by prayer, practice of pranayama, the use of any technique known to be helpful, nurturing aspiration to be enlightened, and fervent devotion to God.

Kriya Yoga (disciplined thinking, feeling, and living; Self-discovery and metaphysical study; and surrender to God) is the way to remove all mental and physical obstacles to spiritual growth and illumination of consciousness. Patanjali described the five primary obstacles (chapter 2, verse 3) as ignorance of spiritual realities; ego-identification; sentimental attraction; aversion; and fear of death.

Lack of knowledge of spiritual realities is the cause of all other limiting characteristics. When we know our true nature as spiritual beings and the reality of Consciousness and its processes, limitations no longer exist.

The ego is a mistaken sense of selfhood. Self-knowledge purifies the ego, our perception of what we are.

Sentimental attraction to ideas, things, circumstances, and relationships interferes with rational thinking and blurs powers of discernment.

Aversion, especially to what is beneficial or life-enhancing, reinforces egocentric thinking and behavior.

Although some people say that death is feared because of subconscious memories of previous physical deaths, all living things usually try to avoid death because of their innate urge to survive. Fear of death is removed by Self- and God-knowledge.

Meditation Practice

Moving Awareness Through the Chakras

This technique can be used as a supplemental practice during longer meditation sessions or instead of kriya pranayama if one cannot practice it.

Occasions when kriya pranayama should not be practiced:

- When one is extremely tired or ill.
- If breathing is difficult.
- During pregnancy.
- During menstruation.

Mantra meditation, Om contemplation, moving awareness through the chakras, and prayer can be practiced at any time.

The Technique: Sitting in an upright posture, gaze into the spiritual eye and be aware of your spine. Feel it.

- Feel the base chakra at the bottom of your spine. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration in the base chakra.
- Locate the second chakra at the sacral area of your spine. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Locate the third chakra at the lumbar area of your spine. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Locate the fourth chakra between your shoulder blades. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Locate the fifth chakra in the spine opposite your throat. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Mentally chant "Om" at the spiritual eye, feeling the vibration there.
- Mentally chant "Om" in the crown chakra, feeling the vibration there. Pause for a moment. Descend through the chakras, chanting "Om" at each one, feeling the vibration.

Repeat this process a few times, concluding your practice at the crown chakra and resting in the deep silence. Listen to subtle inner sounds (if you hear them). Let your attention and awareness merge with the formless Infinite.

Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

I am focusing on living a more disciplined life and find that it is helpful to remember the lives of the gurus and to deepen my attunement with the Kriya Yoga lineage. Elaborate on the meanings of the words discipline *and* disciple.

When we are attuned to the gurus of our lineage, spiritual force and God's grace can more easily flow. Mental and spiritual attunement improves when we are thankful for the knowledge of the spiritual path we have been given, are attentive to spiritual practices, and try to always live a Self-aware, God-centered life. Paramahansa Yogananda often advised me to nurture attunement with him and the gurus, which I did, and do.

A brother disciple shared the following story:

While he was with our guru at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, Mr. James J. Lynn* came into the room for a few minutes. My brother disciple was emotionally moved by Mr. Lynn's respectful demeanor. Later, Paramahansaji said, "He knows where the power comes from."

Discipline is training that is expected to produce a specific kind or pattern of behavior. A *disciple* sincerely endeavors to acquire useful knowledge and to wisely use it. Both words are from Latin *discipulus*, pupil, < *discere*, to learn.

When I was initiated, I was told to practice kriya pranayama twice each day. Is it all right to do it once a day?

It is usually recommended that the basic kriya meditation techniques be practiced morning and evening. If this is not possible, do it once a day. Some advanced meditators practice three

* Paramahansaji had given the monastic name Rajarsi Janakananda to Mr. Lynn when he publicly announced Mr. Lynn as his successor as president and spiritual head of the organization, in 1951

or four times each day. If it seems that intensive practice is causing one to become too introverted, or if subconscious influences become strongly activated, the once or twice a day schedule should be maintained.

Define "samadhi" and describe the states of samadhi that one might experience.

Samadhi is superconsciousness. The early stages may be mixed with thoughts and a variety of subjective perceptions, including degrees of Self- and God-knowledge or spontaneous comprehension of aspects of the larger field of reality. When thoughts and awareness of "otherness" cease, one's samadhi is absolute or pure. The ultimate yoga practice is skillful and frequent practice of samadhi. Other helpful yoga practices can prepare the devotee for samadhi experiences.

Some yogis remain healthy and live to an advanced physical age, while others sometimes have health problems and do not live very long. What determines their health and longevity?

Health and longevity are determined by our basic mind-body constitution, lifestyle, and sense of destiny. Some yogis did not have a strong or balanced mind-body constitution when they were born. Some are not always as attentive to self-care routines (diet, rest, exercise) as they should be. Some feel that when they have accomplished what they came here to accomplish, they should leave the body, and do.

Healthy, long life can provide opportunities for fulfilling major purposes and accomplishing full spiritual growth.

What is the reason for focusing awareness at the spiritual eye center when meditating?

It is recommended for the purpose of facilitating inward turning and concentration. As the mind becomes calm and life forces flow to the front region of the brain, tranquil states of awareness are more easily experienced. Meditating like this nurtures development of the front lobes of the brain—which are related to creativity, concentration, discernment, and the will and the

courage to make right choices.

How can I know when to increase the number of repetitions of kriya pranayama? What is the best way to do this?

Increase them when you feel inclined to do so, so long as there is no undue effort or strain. Concentrated, deep practice is more useful than many superficial repetitions. Do as many as you feel comfortable doing, then sit in the silence with your awareness merged at the spiritual eye and higher brain.

Although I have been practicing kriya pranayama for several months, I don't feel an obvious surge of life force ascending the spinal pathway. What can be done about this?

Put your awareness in the spine, then move the feeling of coolness in the throat (when inhaling during kriya pranayama practice) to the spine. Imagine it as a hollow tube through which life force ascends and descends as you practice. It can also be helpful to practice hatha yoga postures that gently stretch and twist the spine. Constantly aspire to be Self- and God-realized. Cultivate devotion.

Since our solar system is being influenced by an ascending electric time-cycle, is it certain that Planet Earth will sustain life and evolve toward a true Golden Age of enlightenment although some damage has been done to it in recent years? What will cause the time-cycles to end?

The ascending trend will continue for 7,500 years until a 4,800-year era of enlightenment, during which approximately 75 percent of the human population will be highly spiritually aware, will begin. Devotees on a spiritual path need not wait 7,500 years to experience the fulfillment and harmony that enlightenment confers. For one who is Self- and God-realized, environmental conditions are always supportive.

Time-cycles cease when a universe is dissolved. Our solar system, which occupies but a small area in our galaxy (one of several billion in the universe) should exist for many more billions of years before its sun begins to die. The universe will exist for

a longer period of time. Some ancient sages in India estimated the life span of a universe to be 314,159,000,000,000 solar years (more than 300 trillion years). It is likely that our planet is not the only planet in the universe on which life is evolving.

After many years of spiritual practice, I am still endeavoring to become enlightened. What else can I do?

Are you aware that you are a spiritual being aspiring to be more awake, or do you think of yourself as human hoping to become enlightened? At the core of your being you are now whole and knowledgeable. What seems to be spiritual growth is really an unveiling of one's innate essence.

The purpose if Kriya Yoga practice is to remove mental and emotional restrictions that confine and blur soul awareness.

While engaged in right endeavor, nurture remembrance and awareness of what you already are—an individualized unit of one omnipresent Consciousness. When you notice that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors reflect ordinary or modified states of awareness, adjust your point of view and mental attitude and be restored to Self- and God-awareness.

Endeavor to think, feel, and act as you will when you are spiritually enlightened. If it not easy to do this, imagine how a saint would think, feel, and act in a situation that is similar to yours, then try to do likewise. Instead of thinking or saying, "I can't do that because I'm not enlightened," affirm, "I will do my best to think rationally, be optimistic, and act wisely." Also practice keeping your awareness and life force involved with the dorsal, cervical, and spiritual eye chakras at all times.

Define patience *and how one can learn to be patient.*

Patience is mental and emotional calmness at all times, when nothing that occurs disturbs our soul peace (rather than compliant acceptance of unpleasant circumstances). When we are calm in all situations, troublesome subliminal influences (*vasanas*) are more likely to remain dormant or be easily regulated. Living is then enjoyable and effective and meditation practice is easier and more satisfying.

Swami Sri Yukteswar *(1855–1936)* and Paramahansa Yogananda *(1893–1952)* reunited during Yogananda's visit to India from Self-Realization Fellowship in 1936.

Is there any value in praying to saints or spiritual masters who are no longer embodied? Is it useful to pray to God as a Father or as a Divine Mother?

All heartfelt prayers blend the consciousness of one who prays with the one Consciousness regardless of whether one prays to formless Reality, a concept of God, or a disembodied saint or spiritual master. When praying to a saint who is no longer in this world, there is no way to know whether the saint has transcended the relative spheres, now abides in a subtle realm, or has reincarnated and is involved with their personal matters. If, when praying to a saint (or presumed saint), one experiences a sense of intimate communion with God, praying like that has value.

Thinking of God as a father or mother may help a person to feel nurtured, loved, and protected. Fixation at this level of belief can foster and perpetuate a childish mental attitude and emotional state which is not useful. Eventually all concepts, forms, and aspects of God will be transcended.

Was Krishna a real person? Some people think the words that are attributed to Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita were really spoken by him to Arjuna. What about this?

There are no accurate historical records that can provide reliable information about Krishna. According to scholars, several "Krishnas" are described in the literature of India. Two distinct story-traditions can be discerned: 1) Vasudeva-Krishna, a warrior prince who assists the Pandava brothers in a war against their cousins (thus the Bhagavad Gita in the longer Mahabharata epic) and who was considered to be an avatar (divinity in the flesh); and 2) a cowherd Krishna raised by village stepparents who as a child vanquishes demons, plays a flute, and has amorous relationships with the cow herd maidens (*gopis*). He selects one of them, Radha, as his consort. Folklore blends the two Krishnas.

The Bhagavad Gita is an allegory, a story in which events, objects, or characters symbolically represent an idea or moral or religious principle. The five Pandava brothers represent the five lower chakras. Arjuna represents the lumbar chakra where soul

awareness is awakening to Self-knowledge, self-control and will to accomplish. Krishna represents the enlightened consciousness of the devotee on the spiritual path. (See my introduction to *The Eternal Way: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita* for complete details regarding the meanings of the Sanskrit names of the characters mentioned in the story.)

In the popular stories about the cow herd boy Krishna, the flute represents his attracting power; his playful relationships with the cow herd girls and Radha represent the interaction of divine consciousness with various aspects of nature.

Some fundamentalist spiritual aspirants who say that God is a person and his name is Krishna may actually believe this to be so; however, belief (or personal opinion) is not truth.

I have read that saints can sometimes transfer the karma of others to themselves. Is this true? If so, how is it done—and under what circumstances?

Some saints have claimed to have done this. If it occurs, it is the result of sympathetic identification with the person who is in need of help. I do not recommend this practice. A better way to help someone, besides educating them so that they can help themselves, is to "see through" the problem to the solution on behalf of others. If saints suffer, it is not necessarily because of their having taken on someone's karma. Suffering may be due to their own karma, genetic causes, a weak immune system, or failure to live in accord with the laws of nature because of lack of knowledge or disinterest.

When I meditate and my eyes are closed, I see various scenes of people and situations, and sometimes colorful geometrical patterns. What am I seeing? Should I try to examine what I observe?

The various scenes are produced in the mind, caused by impulses arising from unconscious levels of awareness. They are pictures of thoughts you may ordinarily think or dreams you may have when you sleep. Disregard them. Direct your attention to your meditation ideal or practice a technique that will enable you to concentrate more effectively.

The colorful patterns also arise from the unconscious level of the mind. When you see them, focus your gaze by looking into the spiritual eye to see if they will converge to form one light that may be used for inward contemplation. Be more inclined to experience peace, clarity of awareness, and wholeness.

Subjective perceptions come and go; Self-knowledge is more satisfying and contributes to spiritual growth.

Other than receiving instruction in meditation, when one is formally initiated into Kriya Yoga practices, what else is of value?

Of great value is one's commitment to be dedicated on the spiritual path. Also of great value is the connection that is made with an authentic teaching tradition and the lineage of gurus. Without such commitment, and attunement with the gurus, instruction is merely the transmission of information that may or may not be useful.

Not all who request initiation understand the significance of the occasion. Some individuals consider the experience as an interesting event in their lives rather than as an opportunity to learn how to experience rapid spiritual growth. Others are appreciative at the time of initiation, then go on to mix (and try to practice) what they learn with a variety of other systems that are promoted in the new age marketplace—then wonder why their spiritual progress is not satisfying.

Some friends know I have been initiated into Kriya Yoga and are curious about what I do and how they can perhaps also be initiated. What should I tell them?

Advise them to read *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* or *The Science of Self-Realization* (or both books). They can then practice the preliminary meditation procedures to prepare for initiation.

Also, let your lifestyle, words, and behaviors demonstrate to them the usefulness of the Kriya Yoga path.

When I am alone I am usually calm and self-controlled, but when I interact with others I tend to be superficial or erratic in regard to what I say and how I act. Why do I do this?

You know yourself and your personal history better than anyone else. Ask yourself this question and observe your thoughts and feelings.

The problem may be due to your attempts to compensate for feelings of insecurity or lack of self-confidence, or a desire to please and be accepted by others. Cultivate self-confidence, remain calm and soul-centered, and think before you speak or act. Speak in a lower voice tone. Communicate your thoughts and intentions as clearly as possible by what you say and do.

Explain more about how to be conscious of our true nature.

Our true nature is pure consciousness. When we think and feel that we are other than a unit of pure consciousness we tend to identify with an illusional (mistaken) sense of selfhood or ego-based personality. Self-realization results when our awareness is restored to its natural condition.

When we are egocentric and aspire to Self-realization, we may apply various methods that will, hopefully, facilitate our spiritual growth. Many sincere devotees are struggling to "become" Self-realized while not understanding that, at the core of their being, they are already knowledgeable and free.

In metaphysical literature, the word *Self* is used to define the essence of being— which needs to be acknowledged and experienced as our real state. The word soul is used to define a unit of awareness which is not yet conscious of its essence because awareness is blurred and fragmented.

When the mind is calm and awareness is clear, the essence of our being is known and experienced (realized). We may then wonder why we formerly considered Self-realization to be so difficult to actualize.

Do not think that it will require many years or several incarnations of endeavor to be Self-realized. That which you are seeking, you already are. The higher Reality you desire to apprehend has ever been what it is. Continue to contemplate what is true. Discovery will occur in a flash of insight. You will be spiritually awake—liberated forever from erroneous ideas and illusions.

When rested by [kriya] pranayama practice, the nervous system is refreshed. If one daily rests the nervous system in this way, the physical body is vitalized.

– Swami Sri Yukteswar

Meditation practice establishes inner balance, harmonizes the nervous system, purifies the mind, increases will power, and inspires constructive emotions. *– Lahiri Mahasaya*

There is not in this world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual walk with God. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it.

– Brother Lawrence (1605 – 1691)
The Practice of the Presence of God

Sitting in a [firm] meditation posture, the yogi should focus attention inward at the spiritual eye. By successful accomplishment, one experiences unqualified, pure happiness—therefore, this should be done with concentrated endeavor. *– Shiva Samhita*

As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the concentration of the meditator who, with subliminal impulses subdued, practices the yoga of samadhi. *– The Bhagavad Gita 6:19*

Egoism arises only in the absence of investigation of the truth; when one enquires into the idea of ego, it ceases to exist and there is pure, infinite consciousness. Desireless, free from delusions, remain established in Self-knowledge.

– Yoga Vasistha (circa 900 – 1300)

If one has realized [the truth], one is that which alone is and which alone has always been. One cannot describe that state, but only be That. Of course, we loosely talk of Self-realization for want of a better term [description].

– Ramana Maharishi

Radiance

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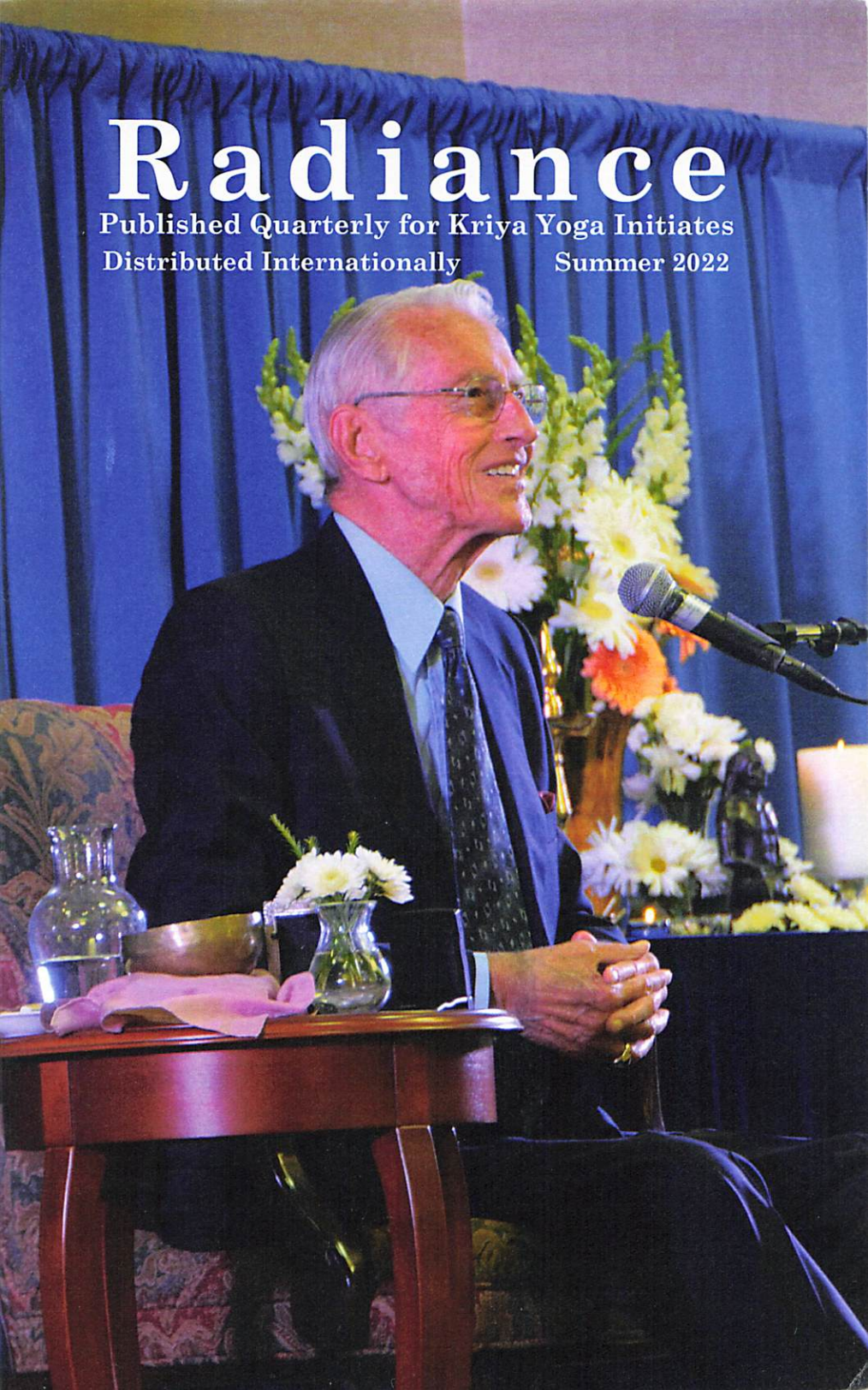

Roy Eugene Davis (second from right), CSA President Clifford Rosen (far left), and representatives from the Kriya Yoga Gurukulam (Vedic residential school), Puri, India, during a visit to Karar Ashram, founded by Swami Sri Yukteswar in 1903. – *Fall 2008*

Front cover photo: Roy Eugene Davis speaking at the 2016 Kriya Yoga Congress, San Jose, California

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Kathleen Low, Editor
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Self-Evaluation for Kriya Initiates

Answer these questions when you are alone. If corrective actions are necessary, let your conscience guide you. If you need more knowledge, acquire it.

conscience Conformity to our sense of appropriate conduct.

1. I awaken each morning with thoughts of God and gurus in my mind. [ ] yes [ ] no

2. I read God-centered truth literature daily. [ ] yes [ ] no

3. I practice kriya yoga meditation routines on a regular, daily schedule. [ ] yes [ ] no

5. I regularly adhere to self-care regimens for my total health and well-being. [ ] yes [ ] no

6. I perform all of my duties skillfully, without attachment to them or their results. [ ] yes [ ] no

7. When I think about and relate to others I acknowledge them as divine beings. [ ] yes [ ] no

8. When relating to others, I am always courteous and my behaviors are appropriate to the situation. [ ] yes [ ] no

9. I am always optimistic, expecting ideal outcomes for all emerging events and circumstances. [ ] yes [ ] no

10. I am totally committed to the kriya yoga path and always do my best to live up to my innate potential. [ ] yes [ ] no

Kriya Constructive action. **Yoga** Oneness, wholeness.

Book Excerpt

Life Surrendered in God

From the first section of the book, available in August 2022 by CSA Press, 312 pages, $12.00.

At our deepest level, behind the screen of mind and personality, is the pure, immortal, true Self we are. It is now what it has ever been and will be—pure, clear, bright, and complete. The Self we are, is God as us. Not everyone knows this about themselves and not all who intuitively feel it are able to immediately actualize it—to identify with it and live from it. No matter what your present conscious awareness of God is, with right attention and right action you can awaken to your divine nature and actualize it. Along with your right involvement, God's grace is the most influential ingredient in the enlightenment process. What a difference it makes when we are expressing all that we are capable of expressing! We then see the world through purified senses and flawlessly comprehend all that is examined. We experience peace of soul. We express health, harmony, and right action in all circumstances. We understand the rhythms and cycles of the universe and are able to attend to our duties without attachment to them or to their results. We function within the boundaries of time while grounded in timelessness.

Discipleship is easy for the surrendered devotee and difficult for the unsurrendered. And even when we want to be surrendered, we may have difficulty. The spirit may be willing but the flesh may be weak; that is, our aspiration may be legitimate but habits and mental conditionings may yet be influential. We may sincerely desire God-realization and have only a few personal restrictions, but be emotionally immature. The four major emotional habits to overcome on the discipleship path are *anger*, *resentment*, *willfulness*, and *self-pity*. These tend to influence us to engage in overt, or self-directed, destructive behavior. When angry, resentful, or willful, we may engage in addictive and harmful behavior. When overcome by self-pity we may remain small-minded and reclusive.

To Have Real Purpose in Life and Unfold Soul Capacities, Do These Things

To experience relative and absolute fulfillment, come to terms with life in relationship to your basic soul inclinations.

1. *Fulfill Your Duties and Be Happy* – Examine your basic psychophysiological constitution, personality, and abilities, and determine your role in life. Then fulfill your duties and social obligations in a spirit of goodwill while cultivating the virtues and living a moral life. This, along with the three following guidelines, will contribute to relative fulfillment and happiness. Whatever your lifestyle, relationships, occupation, or profession, let your life be pure and your actions always constructive.
2. *Satisfy Legitimate Needs and Desires* – Provide a secure basis for your life and for your spiritual practices by satisfying all of your legitimate needs and desires. Housing, clothing, food, emotional support, supportive relationships, and ability to creatively express will liberate your mind from anxiety and provide the opportunity to become cultured as well as to fulfill higher aspirations. Emotional conflicts will be removed as you learn to function freely. Be comfortable, without attachments.
3. *Cultivate a Prosperity Consciousness* – To prosper is "to thrive, flourish, and be successful in all useful ventures." There is no spiritual value in being impoverished and there is no lasting happiness in being materialistic, but you should easily be able to have whatever you need to accomplish your purposes. An understanding relationship with our world is an indication of psychological health, and psychological health is necessary for success on the spiritual path. Whatever your role in life, be it one of simplicity or one that is more active and influential, so long as you are fulfilling your destined purposes you should be prosperous to the extent needed to fulfill those purposes.
4. *Remain Focused on the Goal of God-realization* – While attending to basic matters, be engaged in spiritual practices, yearning always for God-realization. To attend to outer needs while neglecting spiritual growth is to miss the mark in life. Responsible living provides the foundation for spiritual growth, and

spiritual growth makes it easier to fulfill personal obligations and achieve necessary goals.

Philosophy, Religion and Revealed Truth

Philosophy—the rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, and conduct—has three branches: natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and metaphysical philosophy. Such investigation should lead one to complete understanding of the subject. Philosophical inquiry can proceed by analytical examination, using the faculty of intelligence to determine conclusions until a shift from determination to intuition allows direct insight. Until direct insight is attained, philosophical conclusions will always be incomplete regardless of their usefulness as guiding influences in our lives. This is because the intellect is of the mind: it is the faculty of determination related to data. Intuition is the subjective side of intellect and allows direct perception unrelated to objective data.

Using mental faculties, we can speculate about our relationship with the world and God. This can be the first step in the acquisition of knowledge which can result in right behavior and the ability to examine esoteric (inner) causes of outer effects. The study of physics (the laws of nature) can awaken a desire to know the operations of the subjective side of life. Philosophical inquiry can lead to spiritual practice and soul unfoldment. For one intent on discovery, all legitimate questions must have answers and all correctly stated problems must have solutions, but answers and solutions found in the relative realm are incomplete. Philosophical inquiry must lead to contemplation, and contemplation must lead to final insight. This is the desired end of philosophical inquiry.

The religious impulse is innate to the soul and causes every soul to sooner or later desire to know the meaning of life and experience God-realization and transcendence. Self-conscious people are, for the most part, preoccupied with actions and involvements related to physical survival and maintenance of the personality, little knowing that inner changes are steadily occurring which will one day result in spiritual awakening.

Various philosophical views have been offered in an attempt to

explain the religious impulse. A primitive view is that the religious urge awakened when early man wanted to know the meaning of his dreams or of the forces of nature. A popular psychological opinion, first propounded some decades ago and still believed by many, is that man turns to religion in order to resolve neurotic conflicts. Not being able to resolve such conflicts, one turns outward and projects an external object—God as a parent figure, omnipotent and omnipresent—as a substitute for a father or mother. This theory has it that only neurotic people are religious and when they resolve their psychological conflicts they will no longer need their imagined god. This view does not explain why healthy-minded and otherwise happy people also desire to have a relationship with God and to understand the meaning of life.

Religious experiences are unlike ordinary perceptions—their characteristics indicate that something more than effects of personal causes is present. Besides the uniqueness of transcendence to varying degrees, there are three other possible characteristics: 1) a genuine religious or mystical experience involves a response of one's total being—it is a complete experience; 2) it is more intense and "real" than experiences at ordinary levels of human consciousness; 3) it involves an imperative to act. Once such an episode is experienced, we have no doubt but that something unusual and extremely useful has occurred, and we are impelled to behave in accord with higher values. Results vary with individuals. Some are left with a tangible awareness of the presence of a divine power and benevolence. Some experience varying degrees of ecstasy. Still others experience degrees of revelation, insight into life processes, and knowledge of higher realms. These three results may occur together.

While we may, or may not, choose to associate with a traditional, organized religious activity, if we are the least bit responsive to the soul urge to unfold, we cannot deny our religious impulse. We may then pursue religious or mystical experience without formal affiliation with group activities or rituals.

Social involvement in religious gatherings does, however, fulfill the emotional and spiritual needs of some people. One may derive support and encouragement, and acquire a reasonable

philosophical education. Within the framework of traditional religious observances the resolved devotee can privately pursue metaphysical studies as well as engage in meaningful, personal devotional routines.

When we speak of the "oneness" of religions, what is really meant is the underlying unity of purpose, not the outer forms of custom and ritual which may obviously differ, or the philosophical belief systems which widely vary. Outer religious practices differ as much as do personalities and temperaments of individuals, and it is common for us to feel most comfortable with a religious philosophy which agrees with our personal views or satisfies our soul needs.

Behind all authentic religious-philosophical views and practices is the essence which provides the inspiration and spiritual nourishment, and it is this with which we should choose to identify. While respecting all authentic (truly inspired) traditions a devotee should pursue the inner way of surrender in God and righteous living.

The philosophical views presented in this text are those of seers who have experienced direct perception of Reality. The Sanskrit term used to describe the way to enlightenment (complete understanding) is *Sanatana Dharma*, which is translated as "the eternal way of righteousness" or "the eternal religion." True religion "binds" the soul to God, as the right practice of yoga results in "union" with God. The body of knowledge referred to as "revealed truth" comprises the philosophical system taught and lived by Vedic seers.

Veda is from the verb-root *vid*, to know. *Dharma*, from the verb-root *dhri*, means "to hold, to establish" and refers to duty, righteousness, law, and order. It is that to which we adhere or hold to maintain our course in life, and that which holds and maintains us. It also refers to the fundamental law of the nature of a thing which determines its activities. When our dharma, our fundamental nature, is in harmony with the fundamental laws of divine purposes we are said to be in harmony with God's will. This is why there is such a strong emphasis upon the necessity of doing one's duty in accord with universal laws. In this way

we become harmonized with evolutionary purposes and experience the full support of God *in* and *as* nature in our righteous endeavors. This is what it means to be fully surrendered in God. If we are unaware of the facts of life and do not know how to live correctly, or are unable or unwilling to do so after having been informed, we cannot experience harmony and fulfillment until our understanding and behavior are adjusted.

Some history books state that approximately six thousand years ago (estimates vary) a group of people known as *Aryans* ("noble people") migrated from a region of what is now southern Russia, southward to parts of the Middle East and northern India, and were the progenitors of the wisdom of the Vedas. India was then already populated by various groups which had their own developed culture and modes of religious worship. As centuries passed, cultural and religious practices became intermixed until today what is known as Hinduism offers an extreme variety of viewpoints and practices. However, the findings of more recent investigations suggest that the land now known as India was always the home of the people of Vedic times and that migrations from India to other parts of the world have occurred. As of this writing, the matter is still being debated.

The religious-philosophical system of the Indo-Aryans is generally known as Brahmanism or Hinduism—both words used by foreigners. The river Sindhu, flowing from the Arabian Sea and forming a part of the western boundary of India, was known by the ancient Persians as the "Hindu" river. The Greeks, who came later, borrowed this word and changed it to "Indos," which was later converted into the English "Indus." They referred to the country east of the "Indos" as India. Its inhabitants became known as Hindus and their religious philosophy and practices, Hinduism. Early European travelers and Christian missionaries coined the word "Brahmanism" because they found the brahmin caste, the priesthood, dominating social and religious customs and practices. India is known to its inhabitants as *Bharata* or *Bharata-varsha*, derived from Bharata, an ancient king of that country. It is thought by some that India once extended far beyond its present borders and included parts of Iran and Tibet.

The eternal way of righteousness is known wherever it is self-revealed through conscious people and is not created or possessed by any person or group. However, in our current era, this knowledge dawned in the East and from there was spread throughout the planet. It is unfortunate that many people still think in regional terms, forgetting that from where one presently resides east and west are merely relative descriptive references to directions. Because of egoism and cultural influences some people are protective of their own views and prejudiced towards views held by others, whether near or distant. We hear someone say that "Eastern" and "Western" truths are different—as if truth could be categorized by geography. Cultural modes differ while what is true remains true. And, since all people share a common origin and a common sameness, the way to God-realization is the same for all people.

Vedic knowledge, "revealed truth," spread by missionary efforts of religious teachers, and merchants and travelers following trade routes. Seekers went to India to study philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, astrology, and medicine. Books were translated into Arabic and from that language into several European languages. From India the transmission of knowledge also spread through Tibet, China, and all of Asia. Religious teachings and practices were naturally modified when adapted to other cultures but the inner essence has always been available to sincere truth students. Everything that has been known, or will be known, can be known today by anyone who is sufficiently aware to comprehend it. Within every soul—within you and me—is complete knowledge of God and the ability to actualize it.

The Major Problem and the Only Solution

As specialized units of pure consciousness with innate knowledge and almost unlimited capacities, why is it that we are not always aware of our true nature? Why are we not more knowledgeable and freely functional? The problem is unknowingness due to wrong identification. The solution is obvious—we must find a way to awaken, to become conscious and knowledgeable, and to express our innate capacities. Identified with mind and

body, the soul falsely assumes itself to be these. Endowed with drives to express, the deluded soul looks outward and attempts to satisfy its needs in the objective realms, thus creating more complications and their resulting confusions.

Central to enlightenment traditions is the teaching that we need to return attention to the source, to God, and the unmanifest field of pure consciousness. How is this done? Beginning where we are, firmly resolved and imbued with faith, we enter into a process of needed inner transformation and spiritual growth. Three steps are essential to this process—*repentance*, *commitment*, and *right practice*.

To *repent* means to admit our shortcomings and turn to God. To be *committed* means to be firmly decided on a constructive course of action. To *practice* means to adjust behavior so that we are able to live according to our aspiration and commitment.

Without repentance, commitment, and right practice, discipleship is impossible. Without *repentance*, we remain as we are until forced by circumstances or the grace of God to change. Without *commitment* there will be no focus, no direction of attention, or definite sense of purpose. Without *right practice*, knowledge which can only result from experience will be absent. These three steps are the great essentials for spiritual growth. If these three processes cannot be accepted, one cannot be a disciple; to pretend to be a disciple, without surrendering to them, is to be dishonest. To refuse to be a disciple is to remain in a condition of spiritual ignorance. There is no possibility of spiritual growth without discipleship and no progress without surrender and practice. Grace can intervene and cause a conversion experience, but this is rare. In the course of time the force of evolution will result in gradual spiritual awakening, a slow process. For the majority of people, burdened with the weight of mental and emotional conflicts, only *repentance*, *commitment*, and *right practice* affords them the way to knowledge and freedom.

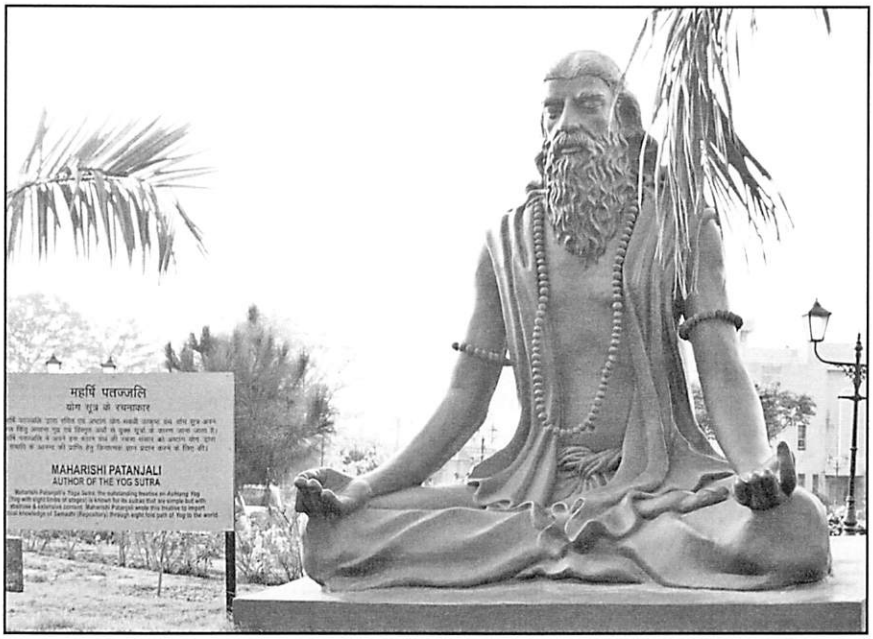
For the surrendered devotee, the enlightenment path is joyous, though sometimes difficult: joyous, because of ever-new episodes of learning and spontaneous discovery; sometimes difficult, because of the tenacity of ingrained habits and tendencies. For the unsur-

rendered but curious seeker, the path is challenging because of resistance to learning and following through with necessary procedures to modify behavior. Behavior must change if growth is to occur. Some behavior must be willingly modified to allow one to conform to the supportive influences of grace and some behavior will change spontaneously as a result of soul unfoldment.

It is important to remember that spiritual growth can occur while we remain true to our calling in life: the role we play because it is our duty or our service-oriented activity. So long as our vocation and our lifestyle are righteous and constructive, we can continue while deepening our spiritual practices. We do not have to withdraw from the world to grow spiritually. We only have to see the world in a new and better way, give attention to important matters, and abstain from relationships and involvements which are not worthy of us, and are in no way useful to us or to the wellness of society or the planet.

The learning process is still relatively slow because we are in the dawning of an awakening era, and the majority of the world's population is still involved with egocentric, materialistic concerns. There has been more change in the direction of higher values in the last two hundred years than in the preceding two thousand, and the process is speeding up. Perhaps one person in a thousand is sincerely asking: Who am I? What is my source? What is the reason for my presence in the world? How can I know the truth?

We cannot understand what we are not capable of comprehending. This is why initial inquiry into the nature of God and the processes of life must be followed by metaphysical study and personal practice. Until we are fully involved with useful procedures we need frequent reminding. This is also why it is important today to spread by all available means, beginning with our own personal example to others, a *quantity* message of hope and faith to provide responsive souls with accurate information and encourage their spiritual education. From among those who are assisted in practical ways and are spiritually educated, some will be receptive to higher teachings and become disciples on the enlightenment path. This is the *quality* work. Both learning opportunities should be offered to serve the needs of everyone.



Statue of Patanjali, reputed author of the *Yoga-Sutras,* written approximately 2,000 years ago.

Kriya Yoga is practiced to weaken and eliminate all obstacles to Self- and God-realization. – *Yoga-Sutras 2:2*

This ancient yoga (of knowledge and practice) is now declared by me to you, for you are my disciple and friend. This is indeed the supreme secret. – *Bhagavad Gita 4:3*

When rested by [kriya] pranayama practice, the nervous system is refreshed and the physical body is vitalized.
– *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

God is revealed within when awareness is made pure by liberating it from all concepts of duality. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Kriya yoga practice quickens spiritual evolution.
– *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Paramahansa Yogananda referred to Babaji as a Mahavatar. Does this mean that Babaji is a full incarnation of God? Are any of the other gurus in our lineage avatars?

The idea that a physical embodiment of unrestricted divine knowledge and power occurs from time to time is based more on wishful thinking than on facts. Many individuals who are said to be such manifestations obviously are not free from restrictions and their abilities are limited—which would not be so if they were indeed full incarnations of God. Many devotees like to think that their spiritual role models came directly from the realm of God, yet an examination of their human history reveals that they had to learn how to unfold their innate abilities and overcome obstacles just as we do.

Paramahansaji referred to Babaji as a *maha* (great) *avatar* (embodiment of divine qualities) because of Babaji's advanced degree of spiritual enlightenment. He also referred to Lahiri Mahasaya as a *yogavatar* (incarnation of yogic attainment) and to Sri Yukteswar as a *jnanavatar* (incarnation of spiritual knowledge). Some of Paramahansaji's disciples refer to him as a *premavatar* (incarnation of divine love). The descriptive terms are used to acknowledge the obvious characteristics of these gurus. All souls, as units of one field of supreme Consciousness, have the same innate divine qualities. Our salvation (permanent freedom from restrictions which are caused by lack of spiritual knowledge) will be the result of our own awakening to Self- and God-realization.

Several religious traditions teach that a messiah, a God-sent person who will remove human ignorance and suffering from the world, will eventually appear. When and where this is supposed to occur, no one knows. Human ignorance and suffering will only be banished when more people become knowledgeable and their divine qualities are freely expressive.

When I meditate, I have difficulty getting my thoughts to settle down. I've tried several mantras, without much success. What else can I do to calm my mind?

Rather than be preoccupied with your thoughts, detach your attention from them by 1) being Self-aware or 2) concentrating on something that is of interest. Either way is useful for meditation practice. Random thought processes are caused by impulses (*vasanas*) from subconscious and unconscious levels of the mind. When they are ignored and attention is directed elsewhere by choice, they become weak and eventually subside.

When nurturing Self-awareness or concentrating on a chosen object (God, light, Om, a mantra, pranayama, or other technique practice), do it with devotion (fervent aspiration supported by intention to accomplish your aim). You will then be able to meditate effectively and have satisfying results. Meditation, without devotion and intention to accomplish the purpose of practice, may be merely a mechanical exercise. Paramahansa Yogananda often reminded his disciples: "Devotion is more important than [a] meditation technique; however, together, they make an unbeatable combination."

Also experiment by sometimes sitting longer than you usually sit. Watch and wait. You will occasionally experience spontaneous adjustments of mental states, clear states of awareness, and interludes of serene peacefulness.

Is it possible to be so enlightened that yoga practices are no longer necessary?

When established in Self- and God-realization, one lives freely and spontaneously. Yoga practices may still be used to further cleanse the subconscious levels of mind and refine the nervous system or to maintain physical health. Meditation will be practiced to experience pure transcendent superconscious states. The final stage is complete liberation of consciousness.

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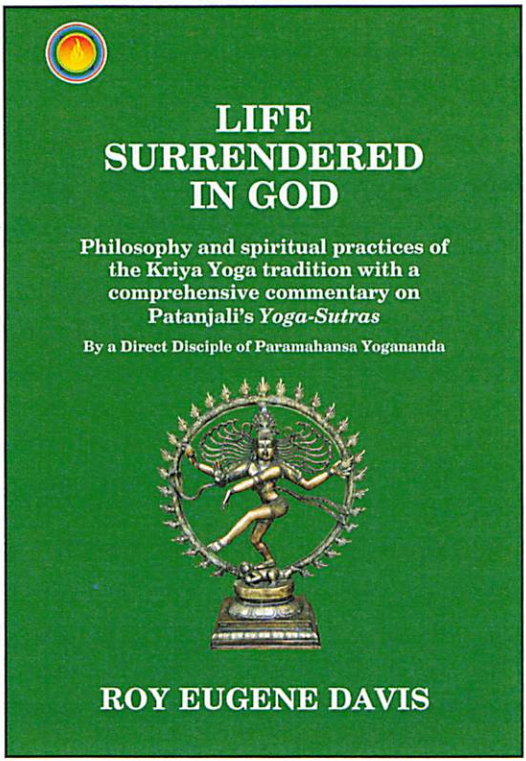
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I wrote this book for God-surrendered devotees of the present era and for truth seekers centuries hence. It should not be taken merely as an interesting treatise to read once and put away. Repeatedly examine its meaning until understanding dawns in the mind as a result of direct, soul perception. – *From the Preface*

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